

IRELAND TO-DAY

Volume II

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ONE SHILLING

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<i>Music</i>	EAMONN O GALLCHOBHAIR
<i>Theatre</i>	SEAN O MEADHRA
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EDITORIAL

The realization of the un-Christian, inhuman horror of the slums is borne more fully upon us when the rains and winds of winter make even the most comfortable of us draw more closely into the fire. In such weather and at such a season the deprivation of even one of our accustomed comforts causes irritation. What then of the malodorous tenements with their windowless rooms patched with boards, and stuffed cloths, decayed and verminous walls, stairs in the last stages of dilapidation, leaking roofs, leaning chimneys and sloping floors and window sills. On top of this, malnutrition, congestion, lack of privacy among families, let alone sexes, unemployment, lack of fuel that might have made up for the bitter want of food and clothing, no water supply or private sanitary accommodation, no decent illumination to dispel the gloom and save the sight of the whole festering generation that must tolerate such surroundings—no amenities in these sub-human regions, though we are told "the heart of Ireland is sound."

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We must say more. What had months ago been stated in these pages, namely, that the Dublin slums were not even being overtaken in their cumulative evolution let alone eradicated, has recently been made plain to all in the *Irish Press*. Finance has been perhaps the chief, certainly not the only barrier, to the removal of the slums. We should hold our financial experts largely responsible if there are not signs in the next few months of a vastly accelerated scheme of housing. Were a Civil War in being to-morrow, ten million pounds would be found and spent freely. Why cannot men's consciences and their fellowmen's sufferings be as potent a stimulus to action as war?

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In the meantime the suggestion is made that with the promised severity of winter, of which in spite of a providentially mild Christmas season we already have had a foretaste, fuel be distributed on an unprecedented scale to the occupants of these miserable slum dwellings. Turf is plentifully stocked all over the country, the railways will be glad to co-operate, and all that is required is the *fiat* of our Finance Ministry.

As well as the appalling internal misery of these dwellings, where 100,000 of our people, in Dublin alone, succeed miraculously in observing the ten commandments, it so happens

that the squalor of the streets and lanes outside is in perfect keeping. Littered lanes, foul refuse heaps, dead walls, the debris of collapsed houses and little or no public lighting—these are the conditions outside. Even a lowering of the general standard in the city would be welcomed rather than a perpetuation of the neglect in these unseen quarters. If something is not done immediately we are faced with an enormous increase in beggary and destitution. We shall soon have to go back to the undesirable practice of indiscriminate charity if our harrowed feelings are to be assuaged.

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With the exception of the Spanish tragedy to which reference was enforced upon us, these columns have been invariably concerned with home affairs. Now, however, we are again forcibly led back to that subject, because the question of Spain has more than ever invaded Ireland of late. Not in the sense, though evidence is not lacking there either, that there has been a discernible drawing in of horns and trimming of sails among those who in the violence of the first months saw nothing but purity of motive and patriotic and religious fervour in the leaders of the rebel forces. The ruthlessness and utter disregard of the laws of warfare, not to speak of their reckless disregard for the future of the Spanish peoples, evidenced by their almost certain agreements with foreigners to part with Spanish territory or raw materials or economic control, have given pause to many who had more unquestioningly taken sides in the earlier stages. Besides, the phase which seemed then predominant, and most horrified the religious sentiment of the Irish people, has long since passed and the waging of the war is in no way related to or concerned with that feature.

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What now brings us back to this subject is the active participation of Irishmen in the Spanish struggle. At least one thousand men have gone—all presumably in the prime of their manhood. The vast majority of these have taken the rebel side—the *coup d'état* side. About two hundred are fighting for the central Government, and the alignment is much the same as in the "Civil War" here of 1922-23, for the latter are almost all ex-Republican volunteers. Thus with a striking similarity of motive and personnel, the civil war is being re-enacted in the Casa del Campo. It is deplorable—and short of Government intervention seems unavoidable—for the first contact and casualties of the two opposing groups are bound to have bitter repercussions at home.

There are two aspects involving responsibility on the part of the Government in connection with this issue. The first is that it has been their duty to find the opportunity for livelihood and an outlet for patriotic action in this country for all Ireland's sons, and in neither regard can it be claimed by their most loyal adherents that they have completely succeeded. The motives actuating those who have gone to Spain are broadly twofold in nature, first, those who are impelled by economic reasons, lack of attractions at home, or mere adventure-seeking, not to speak of the several whom published Court cases have already shown to be merely refugees from justice (and therefore unlikely to add lustre to Ireland's name abroad); secondly those actuated by high motives.

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Of the two groups, the first could have been retained by implementing plans which exist and are obvious for the wholesale eradication of unemployment by such non-competitive public works as afforestation and bog-drainage. The second group, a richer repository of finer feelings than the average, should be retained in this country where surely there is ample room for their activities. It is the duty of the Government to harness such types to the noble tasks that seem to lie ever ahead of us.

There is, too, the population aspect. The hope has been previously expressed in these pages that in the face of a declining or barely static population, every effort should be made to stem emigration and control our human exports. England has considered the operation of the Foreign Enlistment Act in connection with the present problem, whilst Poland has banned all participation. The problem of population-retention is a much more intense and vital one here. Apart from the military and manhood sphere, it has also affected very largely the class of our young girlhood which gravitates towards highly-paid domestic service. Priests all over the country have deplored what has now become a rapid exodus. But only those at whose disposal the State's resources have been placed can remove the root causes.

●

Last month we had taken stock of the position of IRELAND To-DAY, but at the last moment, pressure of space demanded its excision. Now when we would like to write at length, we are forced to be brief. But what we have to write is IMPORTANT.

We have given all Ireland the first lay monthly magazine that has dealt with Social, Economic, National and Cultural

matters, together with a strong literary intrusion of story, poems and a much-appreciated book section. Its reception has been wide and encouraging and the most frequent note in communications received, from America and other parts of the world, is anxiety as to our continued existence. Our only reply to this is that we cannot last a day longer than the co-operation of our readers, subscribers, contributors and advertisers.

●

We appeal therefore to such among these as have our best interests at heart and think that our disappearance would be a loss to redouble their efforts on our behalf. Readers, by the regularity of their demand, or by the placing of a steady order with their newsagent, by requesting their newsagent to stock our magazine and what is more important, to renew their order when their initial stock has been quickly exhausted. Subscribers, by spreading the magazine among their friends, and by making a drive to secure at least *one* new subscriber this month. Contributors, by coming forward with the best of their material, so that the high standard may be more than maintained. Lastly, advertisers, by their just recognition of a medium of what is technically known as 'universal' appeal; the type of reader is emphatically a potential customer and the very high circulation *per copy* due to its being widely read in libraries, doctors' waiting-rooms and hotel reading-rooms, more than offsets the fact that while we have reached, we have not yet exceeded, a certified printing of only 3,500 copies.

●

We have conceived it necessary to speak in these terms to our public, for we have reached the time when we must make our stand more assertive. It will no doubt come as a surprise to our readers that—for all the evasiveness and lack of courage with which we have been accused by some—we have by others been condemned in no uncertain terms as "subversive" and "communistic." The falsity of these charges can be proven by a challenge to our opponents to be specific. We would continue to ignore such efforts to blanket all intellectual activity, without which the nation becomes atrophied and palsied, were it not that the action adopted has been direct, and has gone so far as to demand its withdrawal from sale in shops, to condemn it at meetings and confraternities and even to bring pressure on advertisers to withhold their support.

A FOREIGN COMMENTARY

IN the Far East things have been happening and are happening now, which will have, in the not very distant future, an immense effect upon the rest of the world. In order to understand what is taking place, it is essential to realise the factors which Japan considers important to her in the orientation of her foreign policy; for Japan, of the many nations involved, is the least satisfied with the *status quo* and, consequently, the most eager for action. There is a tendency on the part of most other nations to brand Japan as the villain of the piece and to leave it at that. To do so is to be grossly unfair. For a nation of Japan's size to exist, she must either force her seventy millions to live in misery on a few small islands, or follow the English example of migrating all over the world and establishing as large a foreign trade as possible, while earning the praise and admiration of all for her unselfish maintenance of the "freedom of the seas." Now Japan has tried migrating, she has tried friendly trade. In both cases she met with open or concealed hostility. In California it was found that the Japanese worked too hard and would soon be extremely powerful in the U.S.A. if they were allowed equal opportunities, and so the Japanese Immigration Law of 1924 was passed. Similar restrictions in Australia have prevented the Japanese from emigrating there, though that continent can hardly be said to be overpopulated. As Admiral Osborne puts it, Australia, "a very sparsely populated country," has "a vision in the future of an all-white population, a very high ideal." The Japanese may, perhaps, be pardoned for not appreciating the loftiness of this ideal. It should also be remembered that in 1919 Japan tried to have included in the League Covenant a clause concerning racial equality. This the peacemakers refused. Similarly, in trying to build up a foreign trade, Japan has found barrier after barrier in her path.

* * *

Now emigration difficulties have produced a so-called "surplus population" problem, and the trade restrictions have brought to Japan much "social unrest," which is simply another way of saying that some Japanese think that their hardships could be alleviated by a change in the social system far more lastingly than by conquest. The fact that in the years following the war two hundred thousand copies of the complete translation of Marx's *Capital* were sold, is not without significance. But the majority of Japanese considered that internal reform would not provide the solution to their problems, and so the

"independent" state of Manchukuo was founded. It will be remembered that from 1895 to 1910 Korea was also an "independent" state, guaranteed by Japan; it is now Japanese. The method of taking Manchuria was a simple one. The eminently successful raid on the Transvaal by Dr. Jameson provided a valuable precedent. The fact that all Chinese who are against the Government in power are "bandits" made further expansion essential. And so, one by one, the Chinese northern provinces have been brought within the sphere of Japanese influence. The ancient capital Peking and much of Inner Mongolia are now in Japanese control, and the one practicable land route to China down through Manchuria to the valleys of the Hwang-ho and the Yang-tse has been rendered safe for democracy (made in Japan). Lastly, even the Nanking Government has been of late prone to come to terms with Japan, for two reasons: (a) they feel themselves too ill-equipped as yet to oppose Japan by force, and (b) they would like to have Japan's aid in the "cleaning up" of the provinces of the interior, governed mostly by soviets of peasants and workers who have revolted against their landlords and warlords. These provinces are usually described as being "infested with bandits." It was to quell these "bandits and communists" that the Nanking Government had sent out an army under Chang Hsueh-liang. And now the seizing by the latter of the Nanking Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, Chiang Kai-shek, has startled the world. It is certainly startling when notorious highway robbers and bandits suddenly become very patriotic and actually organise a revolt against a Government which they accuse of "betraying their country to its hereditary enemy." When, however, the leader of the Government army sent to attack them becomes convinced that they are right and decides to join forces with them, we must be forgiven if we come to the conclusion that "bandit" in Chinese must have a very special sense. When we remember that the rebel marshal is a son of Chang Tso-lin, the warlord of Manchuria, whose assassination in 1928 left Manchuria an easy prey to Japanese imperialism, we begin to see that Chinese wars and revolts may not be, perhaps, quite so muddled and meaningless as our newspapers assure us that they are.

* * *

The steady growth of Japanese power has not escaped the notice of the other nations, which have indirectly, but none the less surely, caused it. The U.S.A. have reason to regret the fact that after the war Japan was given a mandate over the ex-German possessions in the Pacific. These islands, the

southernmost portion of the Japanese Empire, effectively cut off the Philippine Islands from the U.S.A. They may yet prove of immense strategic value to Japan; if she can keep them. (Strange, incidentally, that a nation outside the League should still retain a League mandate.) England has been constructing for some time past a huge naval dockyard in Singapore. The estimated cost is nine million pounds; a big sum, for the taxpayer, but the western gateway to the Pacific *must* be equipped as a modern naval base, if British interests are to be safeguarded. Germany's move has been one of the cleverest: a pact with Japan. This is not a cunning method of enlisting Japan's aid in the crusade to save civilization from the Yellow Peril, but an alliance to save us from that other peril, Communism. It must not be thought that the Japanese horror of Communism is based on religious grounds, and the rumour that a Shinto Front has been formed in Tokyo should be accepted with reserve. No, their objection to Communism is not unconnected with the facts: (a) that Russia hinders their expansion into Eastern Siberia and prevents their penetration into Outer Mongolia, and (b) that the most anti-Japanese elements in China have shown a lamentable tendency to turn to Russia for help (hence the synonym "Communist" for "bandit" in China). The tactical advantage of labelling your opponents "Communist" is obvious, for any aggression is permissible against these inhuman monsters. As one of our dailies puts it: "Japan has been given (by the capture of Chiang Kai-shek) a *valid reason* to bring still more of Northern China under her control on the grounds that it contains an obvious Communist menace." (The italics are mine). China may, or may not, be comforted to learn that "the agreement (between Japan and Germany) is not directed against China. On the contrary, Japanese policy is to include China in the League which will say to Communism: 'Thou shalt not pass,'" China, somehow, does not like Japan's method of "including" them, as a tiger might "include" a bullock. That Russia has so far been extremely accommodating to Japan (as was instanced by her selling of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchukuo for less than one-sixth of the original cost) has not changed Japanese policy in the slightest. For three years Japan has continued to evade the proposal made by the Soviet Government for the conclusion of a non-aggression pact.

* * *

The rumour that there is a secret clause in this German-Japanese pact, and that it deals with certain hypothetical

--(continued on page 92)

A CHORUS FROM EURIPIDES

SUPPLIANT WOMEN, II 42-86.

(The mourning mothers petition Queen Aethra).

Hearken oh age, to agéd lips attending,
Ours who at your knee on our knees are bending :
Rescue the broken bodies of our sons !
Limbs cast out by death who limbs doth shatter,
Food whereon the mountain beast grows fatter !
Seeing our tears, receive our orisons.

Wet with weeping, eyes ; and agéd faces
Scored with tearing fingers ! What replaces
Broken bodies of sons we may not streak ?
May not speed them out of the homes they gladdened,
May not heap in the lands their slaying saddened
Tomb of stone their memory to bespeak.

You, too, lady, you too bore a royal
Pledge of love's delight and wedlock loyal :
Pity, oh pity, the broken limbs we bore.
Move thy son to visit Ismenus' river,
Into our longing arms our sons deliver,
Building tomb each body brave to store.

Not for ritual, nay, from sternest needing
Came I here to the Goddess, falling, pleading,
Where her altar kindles, right to implore.
Fortune yours and might to aid misfortune,
Child to succour the childless who importune
Into our arms return of the sons we bore.

Once again sound forth lament, lamenting :
Once again, hand thudding, bosom indenting,
Moan together, women, together nurse
Threne to blandish Death : each nail go slashing,
Bloodless cheek of age with crimson splashing :
These we have lost are all our universe.

Joyless joy, yea lust of grief unsated,
Pours a torrent of weeping unabated,
Even as wet drops ooze from a headland steep.
For dead children who shall comfort mothers ?
Who shall stay their weeping ? Comfort others !
We would go where the dead forget to weep.

ART AND INDUSTRY

SIGNS have not been wanting recently that there is a growing realisation of the need for some application of Art to Irish Industry. Dr. Bodkin in a recent lecture stressed the importance of art to industry in Ireland and the beneficial influence which it can exert on the future prosperity of our country. At the Aonach na Nodlag references were also made to the subject. There is a possibility that industrialists may regard such talk as theoretical and fanciful utterances of people who live in the clouds. I wish, then, to make a case for the desirability of a link between art and industry as a practical and highly desirable ideal and one that will not only enhance the prestige of our productions, but, above all, prove to be good business as well.

Since the establishment of the Irish Free State there has been a gradually intensifying process of industrialisation of the country. From a policy of selective tariffs we have now arrived at wholehog protection, with the result, that a very large range of commodities is being made here both of a utilitarian and luxury character.

Amongst some almost unavoidable faults that are apt to appear in highly protected industries is a sense of independence and indifference to quality on the part of some manufacturers—an intolerance of criticism and advice is also a danger. Of course, one must make allowances for the many difficulties that have to be surmounted in starting from scratch, but even so there have been many cases in our new industries of unscientific approach—elementary principles of efficiency have been lacking. It is hardly to be expected that in such cases there will be much concern for good taste and design* in the article produced. Manufacturers in their highly sheltered position have constituted themselves arbiters of what the consumers must take, like and buy. Successful manufacturers the world over have come to realise that the very reverse should be and is the case.

* For the purpose of this article the word Design is used in its restricted sense, meaning the shape or form, craftsmanship or decoration of the manufacturer's finished product.

Constant vigilance and study of the requirements and tastes of the consumer, combined with an effort to produce an attractively designed article, is the only key to successful manufacturing and marketing.

Concrete cases could be quoted of customers having entered shops and demanded Irish goods, but on being shown them changed their minds because of their bad design and purchased in preference English and foreign articles of better design. It is bad enough that indifferent customers are sold foreign goods, but when friendly disposed buyers cannot be served, the fault must be with the merchandise. The manufacturers' reply to complaints of this nature is very often a threat of appeal to the Government for further compulsion to be brought to bear on the retailer to sell the goods, instead of making a determination to improve the selling qualities of the articles manufactured. Probably many think that their designs are very good. But haphazard and old-fashioned methods of using designs copied from catalogues, or invented by the principal or some handy man in the concern without any artistic knowledge or training whatever, will no longer suffice. Special education and qualification is necessary in the industrial designer of to-day.

The design and decoration of much of our present production is—to put it mildly—not good. Crude, garish and vulgar elaboration is mistaken for decorativeness. The modern trend of simplicity and suitability to purpose is not appreciated—incidentally, these characteristics make the cost of production cheaper. If our industrialists could be made to see that good design is not only culturally desirable but good business as well, we could then get to work to find a practical link between art and industry. The artistic design and delicate dignified colours of Foxford rugs have justly won world-wide renown for their products. The simple forms and austere colour of Carrigaline pottery make this ware worthy to take its place in any company.

Until comparatively recently the paths of art and industry were, in most countries, regarded as wide apart, but since the

beginning of this century there had been a growing realisation of the necessity for their co-operation. Mass production in its early days was able to sell on price alone—but as supply got ahead of demand competition made it necessary for the manufacturer to give some further incentive other than price—quality and design thus became important sales producing factors, so that to-day in all first-class industrial countries the department of art and design is an essential one in their factories.

Because of our small population it will shortly be necessary for manufacturers to develop an export market for surplus production. With the high costs of manufacturing in this country we cannot compete outside the Irish Free State on price—so that the craftsmanship and design of our goods will have to be their main selling point as is the case with the Royal Copenhagen porcelain which, though rather expensive, finds a ready sale in all parts of the world because of its aesthetic qualities.

Under the scheme of re-organisation of the Metropolitan School of Art, now replaced by a National College of Art, it is proposed to establish a professorship of Design in Industry. This is to be the best paid position in the college and is meant to be of practical use to Irish industry. There seems to be much diversity of opinion as to what type of person should be appointed. Because of the lack of interest by industrialists and business men in this subject at the moment, one hears only the views of artists, art critics and their friends. Naturally they argue that no different qualification is necessary for the industrial design professorship than the others. With this view I do not agree. The same artistic nature is, no doubt, necessary for both, but the artist must decide to apply himself, or herself, to either the fine arts or the applied arts. Most artists know little of the process of manufacture and tend to live in one compartment of scholastic design, and they lack practical or commercial aptitudes. I think that it is neither practical nor desirable that the functions of designer and artist should be mixed, for a different training and life are necessary for success

in each sphere. An attempt to mix the two can only result in failure at both. In England, where they have now had practical experience, the artists themselves have recognised that designing for industry is a specialised and different career from that of the pure painter or sculptor. The Royal Society of Arts has recently instituted "a high distinction for designers for industry who have attained to eminence in creative design," namely, the conferring of the D.I. (Designer for Industry) upon a limited number of designers elected by them. The number of holders of this honour is not at any one time to exceed thirty. This coming, as it does, from a society consisting of workers in the fine arts, is a distinct admission of the difference that has been found in actual practice—incidentally, one of the artists on whom the title has been conferred is H. G. Murphy (goldsmith and silversmith). The Irish artists, shamefully neglected, are anxious, quite naturally, to seize any opportunity that seems to hold out hopes of a livelihood or job, and so they see in this proposal to apply art to Irish industry a hope of indirect subsidy and succour to the Fine Arts. Unless such ideas are quickly dispelled there is danger of irreparable harm being done to the whole scheme, for nothing will frighten industrialists away more than the feeling that they are to be used in such a manner. There is one reason only that will appeal to them and that is the sales increasing power which art can be, when correctly applied to their businesses. Undoubtedly something should be done to foster the fine arts in this country, and a scheme on the lines suggested in a recent article by Dr. Devane in *IRELAND TO-DAY* and not as a burden on industry, would be a satisfactory solution of their case. Any benefits that might accrue to the artists must be merely incidental. Before discussing further this school for designers in the proposed College of Art it might be helpful to explore briefly the general subject. First, let us mention some of the main difficulties to be encountered in trying to make manufacturers willing to avail themselves of the services of trained designers. There are the manufacturers

who adhere to old designs which do not have to be paid for ; conservative manufacturers who are not acquainted with progress and change, and who, in many cases, are not well educated or travelled ; those who are complacent, prejudiced, or just stupid. Then there is the idea that with cheap or purely utility goods design does not matter. It has now been realised by successful producers in well-developed industrial countries that, if anything, more care and thought should be given to the cheap article which is to be sold in large quantities than to the expensive and slow selling one, for it is on the popular product that most profits are made in the long run. If such articles sell well when carelessly designed and when they are only bought of necessity, it is only reasonable to expect that they will be even better sellers when made attractive. Some great chain stores have realised this and have found that an attractively designed and coloured lemon squeezer proved a highly successful sales proposition compared to an ugly and purely utilitarian article previously offered. Similarly, well designed table glasses of the cheapest quality, which in dull designs were only bought of necessity, are now sold in greatly increased numbers because of their additional quality of attractiveness.

Many businessmen think of a designer as an unpractical person who sets an impossible standard which neither manufacturer nor public can understand. From a questionnaire issued by the author of a work, "Industrial Design,"* the following statements were made by leading business men who have had practical experience in the employment of designers :—

"Industry is only interested in those designs that there are good business reasons to manufacture."—Vaugh Flannery, of Young and Rubicon, New York.

"The function of design is to increase sales."—R. H. F. W. Bernard, Advertising Agent, London.

"The designer must so know, and understand, the industrial process that by his help the manufactured article will be a more beautiful and better article than the craftsman alone can make it. The designer should be the liaison

* *Industrial Design*, by Geoffrey Holme, published by The Studio, Ltd.

between the manufacturer and public."—Francis Lorne, of Tait and Lorne, Architects, London.

"The designer enables the very most to be made of the material used by the industry and at the same time is not unmindful of aesthetics and their subconscious effect."—C. Grasemann, Public Relations Officer, Southern Railway.

"The designer gives originality and all the inspiration and enthusiasm that he has acquired as a result of technical training."—F. J. Donald, Fabric Manufacturer, Dundee.

"The designer should give ideas practically applied in easily saleable form."—Maurice Adams, Furniture Manufacturer, London.

"Good design is that which fitly, pleasingly and without any extravagant embellishment carries out its purpose. But such qualities do not necessarily constitute good commercial design—because uninstructed public taste has inherited a tradition of pretty prettiness or garishness, and any departure from it is unfamiliar. The ordinary man's instinctive attitude towards the unfamiliar is to condemn it—therefore, care must be taken to gradually improve designs and not to introduce drastic and sudden innovations that will be too far ahead of public taste."—Lord Trent.

"Good design is artistic in line and colouring, but not too extreme."—F. McL. Radford.

"The shape, colour and decoration should be in harmony, not only among themselves, but also with the material which it is made of, and with the use for which it was created."—V. Shimada, Japan.

"The evil in much manufacture to-day is that the work of the designer is not functional and the work of the manufacturer is not artistic."—Francis Lorne.

"Good commercial design is where function and utility are achieved in such a fashion as to attract popular taste."—V. Flannery.

"Artists ought to spend almost as much time in the works as in their studios."

The opinion of a metal window designer and manufacturer, which is a highly practical trade, is: "Instead of proceeding with my artistic training I joined the business at about 18 years of age and commenced studying the various processes from the very beginning, and I am confident, at any rate, so far as this firm is concerned, that the functions of the designer can only be fulfilled by somebody who has spent their whole life in it, and to introduce an outside designer would be worse than useless. Design as applied to our business may not be what is generally understood by this term, in that the product is essentially a utilitarian one. So far as we are concerned, design beyond its purely functional nature, is largely dependent on cost, and this can only be adequately studied by anyone who knows the ins and outs of every operation."—W. F. Crittall, Crittall Mf. Co., Braintree.

As to furniture, a manufacturer says: "Nobody can produce really good

designs unless they have lived in a works and are constantly in touch with manufacturing problems of the articles they are designing."—B. Joel, Ltd.

"I believe very strongly in the principle that a man can only call himself a designer when he knows more about the article than the craftsman at the bench."—Francis Lorne.

"A full-time chief designer is the most important member of the staff of a potting factory."—Josiah Wedgwood.

"The designer in the workshops must take pains to educate himself and to keep abreast of current tendencies, by careful study of all classes of goods, even those outside his own province. There is no lack of periodicals available to help in such studies."—Lord Trent, Chairman, Boots Cash Chemists.

"If designers would actually go out into the trade and try to sell their products to the public—as a merchant or salesman has to—they would gain by the experience."—V. Flannery, Young and Rubicon, New York.

"The average art school is ten years behind the times, many teachers are more concerned with purely artistic consideration than with the needs of industry; in fact, many of them have only a very rudimentary conception of what industry requires—there is a gulf fixed between industry and the art school."—R. H. F. W. Bernard.

"There is need for co-operation between industry and those at the head of technical and art schools and colleges."—F. J. Donald.

A department of design in the charge of a practical man, who will have the confidence of industry, is the only solution.

To a question—what would be a proper curriculum for a course in industrial design—one industrialist replied:

- "(a) Natural and mechanical drawing;
- (b) History of design;
- (c) Costume, furniture and architectural courses (elective);
- (d) Mechanical engineering;
- (e) Factory management;
- (f) Marketing;
- (g) Sales promotion and advertising;
- (h) Applied psychology."

—Stanford Briggs.

This gives some idea of how far removed is the atmosphere of industrial design from that of the fine arts.

It will be realised, therefore, that our professor of design will have to be a person of real experience of the needs and requirements of industry. Much depends on the appointment of a suitable person, who will inspire confidence in our industrialists. For if at the first contacts of art and industry the business men

are made uneasy or feel that the designer is not a practical person, the task of improving the standard of our products, may be made a very much more difficult one—for if frightened off in the beginning the manufacturers' attention and interest will be much harder to recapture.

In the appointment to this post the Department of Industry and Commerce should have a strong voice—for they are in close touch with all the activities of our industrial machine. It would, of course, be desirable that an Irish person should fill the position and it should not be impossible to find one with the necessary qualifications.

As the main duties of the Professor of Design, I venture to suggest the following :—

1. The training and guidance of students in the principles of Art and Design.

2. The formation of a reference library of books, journals and periodicals, from all parts of the world, dealing with different industries and trades, illustrating and describing the best and latest productions of these countries.

3. To keep himself, or herself, informed on the general world trend of design and manufacture by visiting international industrial exhibitions and fairs—British Industries Fair, Leipzig Fair, Prague Fair, Vienna, Paris, Brussels, etc. Collecting there photographs and pamphlets and, where possible, samples which could be placed in the reference library of the Design School.

The advice of the professor and use of the library could be free to industrialists. The making of special designs or attendance at factories could be subject to fees. In this way factories unable, or unwilling, to employ full-time designers, could get original and good designs at small or specified cost. Students for the design section of the college could be recruited from the factories and given a suitable course. The college can only teach them general fundamental principles of art and design. As each industry has its own particular requirements, the best

results would come from the practical man who has had a good artistic training as well.

It may be urged that an expression of national spirit or Celtic character should be infused into the designs. Idealism is to be desired, but if it is too strongly apparent at first it will only raise itself as a further barrier to the co-operation of the industrialist—for sad though it may be—he will only be attracted by the better business prospects of this scheme of applying art to his activities. By the appointment of a technically qualified person a beginning will be made and a foundation laid for teaching general principles and the students of the college—our future designers—having learnt the principles of good design, will express the national spirit and sentiment of our nation. A national school of design or painting cannot be started overnight or by order—but if a national spirit is developed in our daily lives—the sensitive temperaments of our artists will be amongst the first to feel and express it in their works and designs. Thus, naturally and almost unconsciously, national characteristics will be apparent in the design of our products.

Meanwhile, it is not necessary or to be expected that manufacturers should suddenly engage special designers or involve themselves in large expenditure on designs. Extraordinary or violent and immediate changes of design are not even recommended, but, first of all, becoming design conscious, by a process of gradual and steady application design can be improved little by little, almost imperceptibly—an alteration here and there. On furniture, an omission of some ugly or unnecessary ornament—the straightening out of a leg—the use of a dignified design in covering, instead of a “futuristic” one. I might mention here that “futuristic” designs are not good modern ones—they are the productions of misguided people, who having heard of cubism, but ignorant of its meaning, imagine that the more angles, colours and complication they introduce into their design the more modern is their creation. These “futuristic” designs in furniture, textiles and pottery are nothing but

abortions. The outstanding feature—perhaps at times too much so—of the modern movement is simplicity—cubism was an extreme point of simplification—the reduction of all visible phenomena to the three basic shapes of cube, cone and cylinder.

By the constant study of what is being done in other countries and by the circulation of as many illustrated trade papers and journals as possible amongst the principals and operatives of industries, an appreciation of what is good craftsmanship and design will grow. With the establishment of a good and practical college where worthy designers can be trained, a new industrial era will have commenced. The products of our country may then be worthy examples of national endeavour in their qualities of craftsmanship and design.

E. A. MAGUIRE

FACING THE ISSUES IN IRELAND.

THE issues are not political, not even national, for although these fringe on our problem, they do not in themselves constitute it. There have been times when the national struggle, the struggle to conserve or regain our nationhood, has coincided with a deep spiritual conflict that strove mightily against the super-session of our culture and our inmost faith, but such occasions have been rare—1641 and 1916, perhaps—and in general our political upheavals and national uprisings have been of secondary importance compared with the issues that now face us.

The tragedy of 1916—by which we mean the epoch, 1916–1923—was that its spiritual content was not perceived by our spiritual leaders. They did not see, what was very truth, that here was one of the purest dedications that ever characterised a sacrifice, that its motives were on a higher spiritual plane than those that actuated most, even of the religious wars. Here was no lust for conquest, for territorial aggrandisement, here no possible or calculable personal advancement, enrichment, no rank or place, no glamour of banners or uniforms. Motive dictated conduct. An exaltation, strange to the occident, filled our people, and even common human frailties were purged for sacrifice. A vision, pure and clear as Sirius over the south, held our people to a straight course. That course was away from paganism, the modern paganisms of materialism and positivism, away from the pollution of a decadent Europe. It held within the bounds of its steadfastness the revivifying seed of a new Europe, as surely as did that century which sent Columbanus and Gall as its missionaries into the paths of Europe.

But the blind eye of our spiritual leaders registered no spiritual movement and the other was coldly inimical towards that in which they saw only the upset of the established order, epitomised in capitalism and the English monarchy, and their opposition became consolidated at the moment of crisis when their sympathy would have made certain the glorious

fruition of the struggle. That is a viewpoint merely, granted, but it is submitted that had things gone otherwise, Ireland would have won through, by sacrifice, faith and tenacity to her ideals, to a mystic leadership among the nations, which would now, on the threshold of Europe's collapse, stay her, bring sanity to her suffering peoples, voicing insistently the message of two thousand years before. But now the afflatus is gone. Trailed the standard. Tradition has warped. Who now would listen to the miserable echoings of an enfeebled land that had sold its birthright—though a time was when all Europe was hushed as one strong spirit fled from Brixton.

I

When the proposed detachment of Ireland from the imperial system that was England's was in process of fulfilment, the people's spiritual leaders, perhaps caught unawares by the intensity of feeling that the action evinced, negatived its purity of motive and castigated the participators in the uprising. No doubt they felt that the diadem of England would slip away from the crown of the Church were Ireland to antagonise her. But in the post-war years that loosened further the tenuous bonds that held man to his beliefs and to some abiding concept of values, the ideal of England's restoration to the Church seemed more and more remote and all that had happened was that the failure of Ireland to break free from England, coupled with the spiritlessness and disillusionment that followed her defeat, made Ireland prey to the very *malaise* that was upon England.

So all is to do again; but with the problem infinitely more complicated. The post-war havoc brought nearer the howl of the wolf. *L'homme déraciné*, we read—man is uprooted, *désenchanté*. The old beliefs are threatened, if not gone. Man is afflicted ever by the spiritual side of his nature and no matter how material his outlook, this rampages about seeking expression in outlandish ways, trying to sublimate itself in weird spiritistic creeds or despairing theories. This is the Europe we

now have to plunge into if we seek freedom, freedom of expression, detachment from England, forcible egress from her Empire (escape now dubbed more heinous as compared with 1916, because since then she has camouflaged her Empire as a Commonwealth of *co-operation*, as some would have it). Yet what is the alternative—virtually the abandonment of all that ever went with our nationality in the golden age, for the status of an English shire, safe and comfortable, a back garden to dig in on a Saturday afternoon, but—war, peace, heroic action, charity to a brother, integrity of family, custody of faith and ideals—relegated shamelessly to England, whilst we busy ourselves with footling industries and lip-restoration of a language which cannot fit in with the status accepted. In the face of the fundamental problems of the day and the “anarchy of values” in Europe, can it be seriously maintained that our Irish governments, even within the ambit of their powers, are governing? Is it not plain that they avoid all grave and vital issues and concentrate, whilst operating a gradual and very slowly ameliorative social and economic policy, on the maintenance of the *status quo* and on avoiding all radical change, so that they can shout down an electorate which may think they have done nothing, with the litany of their petty achievements, and can turn a deaf ear to electors who endeavour to tell them of the vital things they have neglected. In this way no grievous blunders of first magnitude can ever be laid at their door and no real opposition to their programme (*sic*) can rise from the “haves” who may grumble but will certainly agree that things might be much worse. No radical or important initiating legislation, showing imagination and real sympathy with the plight or problems of our people, has yet emanated from an Irish government. Everything is merely a “whittling down” or a “cleaning-up”; the rectification of some little inequality or the elimination of some loophole found in existing legislation.

Small wonder, then, that the two grim alternatives referred

to above should produce something in the nature of a schism between two schools of the same people, sharing identical religious beliefs, but as the poles apart, when the crossing is reached. The one is frightened: a sincere fear lest the Faith itself be lost or degraded; this would appear to include most of the people's spiritual leaders and their more unquestioning adherents. The other holds its courage in its hands, perhaps an unseeing heroism informing its decisions. To this school broadly belong what are known as Republicans, tried by fire, once honestly inflamed by idealism, now disillusioned in the main, but still ready to follow a lead. The harm that is abroad to-day arises from the recriminations between these two. Yet both are orthodox in the eyes of the Church. Some avail of ignorance to place the ban of heterodoxy on the second of the two, but they do only a greater hurt in this way, for they associate in the minds of the revolutionaries, shall we call them, the tenets of the first with their entirely adventitious strictures and inhibitions. And this inculcates a growing disrespect which makes for indifferentism and defection.

In itself, the counsel to retire *intra muros* is one of despair, and this would seem, whilst very understandable and probably no doubt a permissible one, a very short-sighted policy. Yet Ireland seems permeated by it at the moment. No one is so foolish as to deny that dangers exist and risks are at a high premium, yet when such things as countryroad dancing, censorship, communism, mixed bathing, and a hundred others are in question, it is at least open to question whether a precipitate retreat *intra muros* is going to solve anything. At the best, it would secure for the individual the meanest possible entry by a backgate into Heaven, and if we regard ourselves as normally-endowed people of courage, free-will and self-control, let alone an island of saints and scholars, it is really "up to us" to do more than the mere niggardly scraping through with our own salvation, but also to lend a helping hand to others and not keep on our desert island, free from contamination, it is true,

but also bereft of everything that marks the nobility of man's mission. These walls, too, are hard to maintain in the twentieth century—even the desert island is liable to be invaded one day by a party on a follow-the-sun pleasure cruise. Where is then the immunity? There is the crux. Infection and immunity, with increasing knowledge of the subject, become more and more inter-related and inter-dependent. Our A1 peasant stock from Mayo that would live in an ill-ventilated cabin on tea and potatoes and turn out octogenarians, goes to a 40-hour 40-dollar job in the cold hygiene of New York and dies at 40. "The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence," say the mystics. Certain it is that the really resplendent haloes are for the tried and purified, not for the hot-house salvationists.

However we and Europe are inter-related and inter-dependent. In the days of our glory we were in its main-stream. In the days of our suppression and servitude, we were carefully lifted out and placed sixty miles west of Lancashire, with nothing to do except what we were told—by our self-appointed guardian. But now that is all over, there is no going back. Are we to face out-stream and help the others, to struggle through or do we stay put on the bank? It all boils down to the same cleavage, the same fundamental differences of opinion in the long run, but the problem is what is to be done? The answer must yet be deferred a little while.

II

What is this pother about issues? My deposit account was never healthier; I can choose my daily papers; cinemas there are in plenty; two year olds are in demand, my son took second Honours in medicine and really everything in the garden is lovely. During the last war, said to a mother whose only son was over there, these sentiments would sound heartless. To-day "over there" in Europe greater upheavals still are in progress and *we do not know of their existence!* And did we know, it is doubtful if we would feel any urge to interest ourselves in

them, so lowly have we sunk, so narrow our provincialism—to call it insularity were to dissemble.

The old order, the essence of Western civilization, is disintegrating in Europe. The rumblings can be heard. Few trouble to read the seismograph, but it is the few, always, always the few, that shall lead a multitude.

The ancients, for all their simplicity and naturalness, laid the foundations of modern thought and—what far transcends thought, nay directs it and keeps it under control—modern culture. This grew naturally out of the sanity and essential piety of the ancients and when this classical civilisation was declining, the torch was carried on by Christianity which builded a marvellous system, the religion of Christ superimposed on the philosophy of the ancients. But when this system, incorporated in scholasticism, was assailed by the very rationalism that it itself had paved the way for, a new menace had arrived. Man steeped himself in the pursuit of abstract thought—reason was paramount and fascinating. Man's *alter ego* was subordinated and divorced, and achievements that could have flown but naturally only from the twin concurrent streams of belief and reason were held to be the independent offspring of the latter and the use or necessity for the former was disparaged. The Promethean glory of man's present estate was, by a "Promethean defiance," attributed to a kind of vague evolution, to anything, in fact, except its real progenitor—that Christian philosophy and religious system which sponsored the intellectual awakening of modern Europe and with it Western civilisation. Something akin to this treachery, this ingratitude, is the renegade attitude of modern Japan towards its preceptor, China, to whom monuments of gratitude were erected in every village in a moment of human softness, but who now is reviled, brow-beaten and despoiled by its one-time beneficiaries.

With all this hardening of the nature, narrowing of the aims, dereligionising and, therefore, devitalising of culture, came

growing restrictions on the practice of spiritual experience and later again a growing disbelief at all in spiritual experience, even metaphysics or anything outside the natural laws. Scientific conquest, industrial progress completed the imbalance and soon it seemed out-worn, old-fashioned, *unnecessary* to bother about such things. A few giants felt pain at the parting—Goethe and Hegel; a few like Ruskin kept some of the vision and tried to stem the tide of an all-devouring materialism. Each in their turn, Wordsworth, Blake, Coventry Patmore, D. H. Lawrence, stood in some way for the supremacy of the things of the spirit, but the avalanche gained and gains.

To quote Ruskin :

“The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart is, I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a generation of men, savage or civilized, who, taken as a body, so woefully fulfilled the words ‘having no hope and without God in the world’ as the present civilized European race. A Red Indian savage has more sense of a Divine existence round him, or government over him, than the plurality of refined Londoners or Parisians Nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery, the worst in reckless defiance, the plurality in plodding hesitation, doing as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands.”

And, again, Coventry Patmore :

“A strange age of ‘science’ in which no one pays the least attention to the one thing worth knowing—himself ! It was not always so. *Scire te ipsum* was the maxim of all ancient philosophy; the stupidest little Greek knew more of man and, therefore, of God who is ‘very man’ than all our men of science put together.”

Where, then, do we in Ireland find ourselves to-day? We could disown responsibility largely by saying we have been ground down, we have been too busy trying to survive physically. We could say that, thanks to the lack of unity and the defeatism that we referred to in our opening pages, we have been unable to take sides—but we cannot so evade the issue.

It is hoped to revert at a later date to this aspect of the problem, to which, in reality the present essay is merely a preamble. It may be necessary to say hard things. Disciplining will be necessary, dragooning almost. The utter alienation of

the things of the spirit under official auspices will have to cease. Merely physical and secondary difficulties such as ten or twenty million pounds, vested interests in ground rents or slum landlordism must not any longer be allowed to stand in the way of the spiritual emancipation of depressed slum dwellers, who are given political enfranchisement because it costs nothing, means nothing and effects nothing, but are condemned to live under soul-destroying conditions.

Education will have to be a drawing-out of the finer qualities of our youth, not simply a mechanistic training that dehumanises and denationalises. It must cease to be in any respect a mere qualification for the export market.

The fundamentals of a true education would seem to lie as nearly as possible between the systems that differentiated the characters of the Catholic peasantry of Westphalia from those of Berlin medical students in the results of an investigation made known by Baron F. von Hügel. The peasants: "ignorance, roughness, superstition, bigotry, but in face of the fundamental realities of life, a depth of insight, an assurance of action, an at-homeness of conviction, a magnificent swiftness, purity and massiveness." The students: "wide knowledge, polish, suppleness of mind, tolerance, but in face of those same realities the nimble 'enlightened' students were utterly helpless, without insight, action, conviction of any kind."

The Church, too, should be examined in its relation to the people's aspirations. The Church in Ireland, it is submitted, would enormously strengthen its power for good, if it welcomed criticism instead of smothering it. When legitimate criticism is driven underground, it is inclined to explode unhealthily, whereas given expression, it can do much to secure increased respect. The tower of Tradition can be preserved intact if the rank weeds, the clinging, destructive ivy be cut away at the roots. The Church here suffered greatly in prestige when the national aspirations of the people were opposed by her representatives. This is a plain plea for greater sympathy from

the Church for the legitimate national aspirations of those of her children who need be no less loyal because they cherish another, not necessarily conflicting, loyalty.

Many other things will have to come into that survey ; but reverting to the question asked at the end of the previous section, what is to be done? There is little to reply at the moment, except to say that the wisest counsel lies not in despair, not, above all, in condemning and abandoning a spiritual ideal, because, for the moment, its ministers are active only on the side of inaction, are blind to the needs of people and nation. The greatest good for us lies in our refusing to be forced into choosing one of two evils, two injustices, two refuges of panic, Communism or Fascism. Either will be the consequence of our refusal to face the issues : Fascism, with a deeper intrenchment *intra muros* and a tyranny that will be increasingly necessary for the maintenance of the present system of un-Christian capitalism : Communism, with its final break away from tradition, and its identification of capitalist injustice with religion as institution. The highest good therefore would appear to be not retreat to a desert island and not precipitate action without making sure that you are properly equipped for the struggle ahead, but—each in his own sphere—to perform his daily round of duties conscientiously and well, to steel himself for a coming combat, invoking all the aids and graces at his disposal, and to prepare as strenuously as possible for the day of battle.

If this be done—it were an act of despair, a sin against the Holy Ghost, to believe otherwise—a leader will be found, a leader will arise, who will unify the advance, announce the zero hour and lead our country, whole and entire, as defined by its lapping waters, to the destiny which, however interrupted, however enclouded, marches on and will continue to march on to a glorious fulfilment.

LAURENCE J. ROSS

THE REPUBLIC IN 1916-1923

It is proposed, in this, to give a sketch of the rise of the Republic of 1916-23 in terms of Connolly's thesis of "arrested development" or, more fully, the thesis that

"Ireland at the same time as she lost her ancient social system, also lost her language as the vehicle of thought of those who acted as her leaders. As a result of this two-fold loss the nation suffered socially, nationally and intellectually from a prolonged arrested development."

If, in accordance with that, we adopt the view that Ireland's social system has been arrested in its growth, we must adopt the view also that resurgence can only be effected by a resumption of development, by something in the nature of a re-growth from our ancient territorial divisions of the armed and other forces that might constitute a resurgent Irish nation.

History shows that the armed forces went down at Limerick ; but it shows also that they tended to re-grow whenever international troubles furnished a suitable environment, as in the periods of the Napoleonic wars around 1798 and 1803, the European revolutions of 1848, the American Civil War preceding the Fenian movements of 1865-1867, and, finally, the World War around 1916. The Irish armed organisation that, after centuries, went down at Limerick came up again in each of these periods ; and, after 1867, remained organically and physically intact in the Irish Republican Brotherhood to arrive, through Clarke, into the Irish Volunteers, that are stated to have numbered about 18,000 when Clarke, Pearse and Connolly led the rising of 1916. These Volunteers rose up from the old parish and territorial divisions of the country and from the towns and cities as an armed institution arising from the "arrested development" of the past. They formed the first institution in the constitution of the Republic, and were, after 1916, the stimulative defensive influence that produced the resumed armed and other growth from 1917 onwards. They came into the open in the Clare and other elections and

on other occasions in that year, and assembled a convention in October which gave power to its executive to declare war. They were then said to comprise 390 companies; and they grew in the year following, under the influence of the conscription menace and other irritants, to 1,200 companies and a paper roll-call of 100,000 men. They contributed to establish the Dail Eireann of 1919 and, in association with it, worked in the bond of a common oath of allegiance for a common object, an Ireland Gaelic and free in a republican form. In the year 1919, they went gradually into action and began, on a major scale, by clearing the rural parts of British police and by rolling back the English police barrack system into the towns. They subsequently developed "flying columns," principally, to meet sorties from these towns, within which they soon commenced to act extensively and, particularly, through development of "armed patrols," the urban counterpart of the rural "flying column." Gradually, the volunteer processes rolled back British power into the bigger barracks in which the rather rough and ready British armed classes lost their morale.

During this time, the institution of the Irish Volunteers, now known as the I.R.A., developed not so much in numbers as in structure. The latter finally involved, on an area basis, squads, sections, companies, battalions, brigades and divisions. From these there evolved specialized units, such as intelligence and emergency units, flying columns and armed patrols; and, also, a police force which subsequently became associated with that of the Home Affairs authorities. In the matter of engineering and munitions, the Volunteers achieved a new and special adaptation of means to ends and, through their technical staffs, made such scientific advances (often by way of simplification) in items of trenches, bombs, mines, explosives, etc. as, among other things, serve to illustrate the recently recognised fact of the importance of special and even native local science adapted to special local conditions. We have evidence of the organisation in its final form in a statement at the time by the

Chief of Staff of the opposing Free State organisation. This statement showed that the I.R.A. then comprised 61 brigades in 16 divisions, and showed too, significantly, that the ancient territorial divisions were generally the areas of armed units; that, in other words, development had been released, to the extent of resurgence from native lands of 61 brigades and 16 divisions, efficient, to the extent, that they reached their military objectives against British forces then fully available after the European war.

The Republic's courts and police system sprang also from old territorial divisions, from parishes and parts of counties corresponding to the older larger areas with, of course, a flexibility for purposes of growth. They were constituted according to the difficulty of the circumstances under which they arose; in some instances, representatives of the I.R.A., Sinn Fein and Republican Local Governments appointed the three Parish Justices, while the presidents of Parish Courts for a number of parishes appointed the five Justices of the District Courts. Under more settled circumstances, clergy, public representatives and organisational representatives constituted a parish or district convention which appointed Parish and District Justices. Justices, in turn, appointed their own Parish Clerks and District Registrars to attend to the administrative side. The Justices' procedure and decisions passed into their hands and, from them, for certain purposes of summons, civil bill or execution of judgment, to police officers appointed, at the outset, by the I.R.A., and, subsequently, as development proceeded, by a fully formed police system under the administration of Home Affairs. The administration of Home Affairs sanctioned all court appointments and came increasingly into operation through a system of organisers who helped local initiative by informing it of experience already obtained and, when necessary, constituting local conventions and meetings. Home Affairs also appointed the Provincial Circuit Court Judges and Supreme Court Judges, who constituted the upper layers of the system

into the different layers through which cases passed in accordance with their importance and with rules of procedure. Thus, completed and economical arrangements existed arising from parishes and ancient areas and directly from the people, in the cases of the Parish and District Courts, for the adjustment of legal difficulties among the people and for the prevention of wrong-doing. These arrangements extended into urban areas and even into Dublin City, and received the co-operation of lawyers of all shades of political opinion. The satisfaction with them will be recollected by many readers.

Courts and police system naturally arose simultaneously and to meet the urgent need of the moment. At first, the I.R.A. were required to develop the police arrangements and did so by assigning officers from their several units, from squads to divisions. The army felt the strain of this growth which often demanded its best personnel. It, of course, overcame that strain and, finally, in co-operation with Home Affairs evolved a fully developed and economical police system which, because of its natural upgrowth from the people, commanded widespread respect.

As army, courts and police system sprang up, areas became cleared for further development and constructive work. The Local Government elections of 1920 gave the Republic control of a system that was already somewhat native in area and other respects, owing to the fact that, in 1898, the landlord class sold their Grand Jury patronage for an annual sum of some £700,000 and, at that price, allowed native demands to be somewhat satisfied. The 1920 local bodies gave allegiance to the Republic to the extent of more than 75 per cent., and embarked on their work—the smaller rural and urban authorities, then some 300 in number, efficiently managing minor roads, sanitation, housing, and poor and medical relief, the larger county authorities managing major roads, mental hospitals, agricultural and technical instruction and finance. The British re-acted by stopping grants and the Republic replied by a re-organisation that showed the

influence of the native constitutional models of the Gaelic Athletic Association and Gaelic organisations from which the resurgent forces largely sprang. As in the case of the courts, local conventions and conferences, aided by central advice, evolved new Poor Law authorities constituted generally by representatives from the then existing smaller rural and urban authorities and the still existing larger county authorities with, in the more developed instances, representatives of other organisations, such as insurance and medical. These new authorities varied in structure, in adaptation to their areas and, to some extent also, in function. Generally, the Republic aimed at Poor Law reform, but it left to the smaller authorities matters requiring popular scrutiny, for which these authorities were adapted, viz., dispensary medical relief and out-door relief, and transferred to the new bodies the management of the newly organised district and county hospitals and county homes, chiefly for the infirm classes. This entire Local Government system gave, as shown by published figures, the most economical Local Government organisation of all time.

Through Local Government, the Republic passed further to constructive work and utilized the Local Government system to operate its educational ideals by levying a special rate for Irish, the official language of the Republic, and by the establishment with that rate of Irish classes throughout the country, classes largely in the hands of an organisation of Irish teachers that could trace its organic development back through Gaelic League and hedge schools, to remotest origins.

The Republic was, however, set aside before it could advance considerably from the foregoing defensive and mainly regulative functions into economic and full financial functions. It promoted co-operative organisation and improvement in the extractive industries of fishing, agriculture and forestry, and inquiry into mining. It regulated land division and gave it actual financial assistance. It encouraged, too, manufacturing industry and, in the matter of distributive industry, accomplished vital results through the British and Belfast boycotts.

In finance, the Republic's results were remarkable. Finance comes mainly from two sources, governmental—taxation, etc., and economic—business proceeds, etc. As regards governmental finance, the possession of Local Government gave immense resources, so great that the Republic brought the alien banking system to terms under which the Local Government rates and funds were safeguarded by this system. This gave the Republic a money power of some £8,000,000 per annum. Further, in the matter of government finance, Republican loans were floated and were subscribed to, in America to the extent of 5,000,000 dols. and in Ireland to the extent of £379,000. With this money, many matters in the foregoing were attended to and a Republican Agricultural Loan Bank established. On the whole, however, while the Republic did establish a large system of agencies in armed and regulative matters, it did not equally establish agencies in economic and financial matters; and it left generally, when finally subverted, the old penetrative economic and financial system and, particularly, the power of the banks and insurance institutions that group around College Green.

As against the economic authority of the banks we had the governmental authority of Dail Eireann the central organisation that grew up out of the I.R.A. and Sinn Fein Club systems of 1918 and that, through them, could trace an ancient descent. It met first in 1919, stated ideals in terms well known, and passed a temporary constitution, introduced and debated in the Irish language, which, provided for the division of executive functions between a President and Ministers for Defence, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Finance. As events developed, Home Affairs, of these Ministries, alone underwent further subdivision. The latter took various forms but, generally, it provided for separate Ministries for Justice, Local Government, Education, Agriculture, Fisheries, Industry, Labour and Propaganda. The Dail met on several subsequent occasions, provided for research and legislation accordingly and, through its

Ministries and Civil Service, played an important regulative part among the institutions of the Republic, somewhat analogous to the parts played by central governments in federally organised states and entirely different from the part played by the dominance of Westminster in the centralized government of Britain. It worked, through its Ministry of Defence, in close association with the I.R.A. and both, in the bond of a common oath, moved towards an identical objective, an objective received from Clarke, Pearse and Connolly and their predecessors in history.

The Republic too, while making internal adjustments and developments consonant with Connolly's thesis, resumed at the same time Ireland's ancient foreign contacts, through representatives abroad ; and added, through the personal presence of the President of Dail Eireann in America, the closest relationship with the developments of our race over there, developments that might be estimated in terms of blood at an equivalent of over 20,000,000 people. It formed attachments, too, with inherited sentiment on the continent of Europe and convened to give it expression an assembly attended by, among others, a descendant of the O'Donnells, the Duke of Tetuan. Thus, a remarkable Republican system of things grew up from the "arrested development" of the past, a system of things that rolled back British power, that put in its place the institutions that have been described and that brought these institutions into effective contact with the world abroad. It was, probably, the most remarkable instance in history of the triumph of intellect and spirit over matter and its symbol money.

J. B. DESMOND

THE ABBEY THEATRE ATTACKED I

For many years the present writer has been attempting, without the slightest success, to undermine the credit of the Abbey Theatre and to prove to anyone he could buttonhole that, far from being, as is generally held, a strong national force, and a potent factor in the regeneration of this nation, it has been in reality the very opposite, bitterly hostile, retrograde, vile and unprofitable. His contention has appeared so ludicrous that hearty laughter has usually prevented the development of the argument. Listeners remembered the manly sobs they had swallowed over the sorrows of Cathleen Ni Houlihan and refused to hear any more. The open forum which is the boast of IRELAND TO-DAY, however, offers a platform from which the most unpopular opinions, provided they be sincerely felt, may be shouted to the extent of a few thousand words, not without fear of contradiction, but at least without interruption and it should be possible within that space to launch a deadly attack on the prestige of the Abbey Theatre.

The birth of the Abbey—a name which is here used to cover the present institution and anything which preceded it—synchronised roughly with a resurgence of the National Idea which may have been overdue anyway, but which it is convenient to associate with the Boer War and the recruitment of the Irish Brigade. There were other irritants at work, the centenary of the rising of 1798, Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations, and the foundation of the Gaelic League, all more or less coincident with the close of the last century and the beginning of this. The Abbey had little or nothing to do with any of these, and yet it has been confused with them in the public mind. There was a literary side to "the movement" though it had not yet become recognised by that name, and the activities of the Abbey seemed to be part of it, and because the Abbey did draw a little inspiration from the Gaelic gods (then exhumed from their tumuli by the Gaelic League and now in process of reinterment with cries of derision by a generation bitter with disillusion) and

perhaps also because Mr. William Yeats was known to have smashed with his own fair hands the lamps illuminating Dublin shops during "The Jubilee," there grew a belief that the Abbey in its genesis was a part of a general growth when in fact it was a purely literary adventure having its origins in a class the majority of whom would have dropped it like a hot coal if they had suspected in it a living spark of nationality. And not alone to such coincidences must be attributed the fact that the Abbey was accepted by ourselves as being on our side, without which acceptance it would have had little or no influence. More important was the conclusion reached by the founders of the Irish Theatre and the dramatists who wrote for it that they had become at last part of the Irish Nation, not that they had been absorbed into it, but that they had absorbed it. Seeing nothing in the burgeoning around them but a sentimental or literary nationalism which they welcomed as a sane and safe substitute for the militant nationalism of the past, they discovered in themselves a genuine romantic sympathy with it. And we responded to that sympathy.

The plain and ugly truth is that in the early days of the Abbey the Irish people agreed that the Irish Nation was dead. The Irish Party had plastered "Home Rule" on their banners and Dark Rosaleen was only remembered in dingy publichouses over pints of porter equally ready to pledge the victorious return of "the Dublin Fusiliers." The rehabilitation of Cathleen, as a noble though dangerous queen was therefore soothing to our self-esteem. The Renaissance was in fact not recognised by the Irish people. They, like the Abbey, saw in it the birth of a new nation not the rebirth of the old nation. Major McBride and the Irish Brigade who fought for the Boers in South Africa were not regarded (except by a few forgotten old men of the I.R.B.) as a real expression of the Irish people. There was a sneaking pride in them, but there was just as much pride in the Dublin Fusiliers. In short, the early years of the twentieth century saw the nearest approach there has ever been

to the fusion of the Gaelic and Anglo-Irish cultures into that mythical blend which is the ideal of a certain group to-day.

"Romantic Ireland's dead and gone" sang Mr. Yeats, meaning the Ireland of the Fenians, the Ireland which struggled for separation and I am very much afraid that the Irish people agreed with him and while the class which Mr. Yeats represented felt that at last they could afford to sentimentalise over the dead warrior who was no longer a menace (just as New Zealand to-day weeps over "the noble Maori"), so also the Irish people or that enlightened section who listened to Abbey plays, believing that the end had indeed come, were slavishly grateful for the tributes mouthed over the hero's grave by the descendants of the conqueror.

This sentimental sympathy with the Gaelic race, this sentimental sorrow for a gallant nation which is now only a precious memory, is the motif of the Abbey Theatre. It runs through all their plays; it is flagrant in those dramas directly concerned with that eternal striving which heaves beneath every problem in this country and which is regarded by some as the canker poisoning and choking all development and by others as the fire and the light which lifts us out of the mud and slough of slavery.

"They went forth to battle and they always fell," is the text of the sermon preached by the Abbey. The Gael was gallant, lovable, futile and, above all, doomed to defeat. That is the sermon they preached and that is the sermon to which we listened with grateful tears. "They shall be remembered for ever" intoned Mr. Yeats, and instead of proceeding, as any sensible people would, to tear the Abbey brick from brick, we went away glowing with pride in that comfortably distant past which we felt was a little too gallant and futile for the twentieth century.

There are four plays on the Abbey list which amply demonstrate the truth of this thesis—The Rising of the Moon, The Dreamer, Cathleen Ni Houlihan and a fourth the name of which

escapes me, but which I think was *The Piper*. If it were not tragic it would be laughable to remember that these plays, the themes of which would suffice to destroy the morale of the Spartans, have been the four most popular with militant Irishmen and a couple of them were almost invariably chosen to be played at I.R.A. concerts organised to swell company arms funds from 1914 onwards. It is a tremendous tribute to the morale of the I.R.A. that it appears to have been little affected by them, for it is hard to believe that any man who attended a course of these plays could ever summon up courage to fire a shot. Luckily, however, "the boys" never took these dramatic performances very seriously, and in fact if they had ceased in the middle of a scene very few would have been the wiser. And it is safe to assume that the regular Abbey audiences were not strongly represented in the armed patrols of Dublin or the flying columns of the country.

In one very subtle way however the Abbey did affect the morale of certain leaders of the I.R.A. It is a bold statement that the Immolation Idea, that is, the idea of going forth to battle merely to fall, not to ensure victory on another front, or to check the enemy advance, but merely deliberately to be killed, as a soul-stirring gesture, owed something to the teaching of the Abbey. It is unquestionable that certain heroic figures entertained that idea, it is unquestionable that they were great and noble and that they achieved much. It is true also that many were credited with that idea who never entertained it, and is equally unquestionable that if the rank and file of the I.R.A. had understood and shared that idea they would never have gone forth to battle at all, and never inflicted any casualties on the enemy. Enemy casualties are even more useful, in a war, than soul-stirring gestures. And fortunately the vast majority of the I.R.A., never having been to the Abbey, missed the immolation idea altogether. They actually thought they were out to win!

The immolation idea is a corollary of the Abbey sermon.

If the Abbey did not actually invent, it certainly nurtured the belief that since 1798 armed revolts against British authority had ceased to be attempts to achieve victory and had become merely quixotic sentimental gestures, one of which was demanded in each generation "to save Ireland's soul." It was understood, of course, that it was a disembodied soul, to be preserved in lavender only for literature and the Abbey stage. The Abbey did not suspect there would ever be another gesture which would be more than a gesture. Mr. Yeats did not suspect that when Cathleen Ni Houlihan mourned her strong sons who had gone forth to battle and fallen (but who would be remembered for ever, thanks !) that anyone might be moved to emulate them. Lady Gregory never thought that the hunted rat on the Quay in "The Rising of the Moon" could ever inspire a subscription to an arms fund. Mr. Lennox Robinson, in whose travesty of history, *The Dreamer*, Robert Emmet deserted by his drunken rabble of cowardly Dublin workmen, goes to his doom with sad Protestant nobility, can hardly have dreamt that he was fanning a spark, however faint, and surely the forgotten author of *The Piper*—if that was the name of the play where the cowering rebels are huddled in a hut or a cave squabbling after their rout and united against the one realist of their number, the one fighting man, who keeps doggedly repeating "we were bet," and who was not trusted with a gun because he didn't make his Easter Jooty—surely he would have sniggered at the suggestion that his play could have any other effect than the total destruction of the national morale of his audience.

And yet, is it not true that Patrick Pearse was inspired to some extent by the Abbey tradition? Is not "The Singer" an Abbey play as bad as they're made? Is Terence McSwiney's "Insurrection" not the same thing? I saw this play, translated into Irish under the title "Ais-eirighe," produced in a Dublin Feis competition a few years ago, by a group who probably prided themselves on their activity in the cause of nationality,

and the gloom, the woe, the sense of utter, tragic and inevitable defeat which hung about it was enough to make any Irishman afraid of his shadow. The benches in the Mansion House were crowded with innocent school-children drinking the poison with widening eyes and storing up in their minds the Abbey sermon of defeat and doom. The players themselves, of course, would be quite unconscious of this effect, being fortified against it by a vivid memory of what conditions really were between 1916 and 1923.

It is quite plain that Patrick Pearse and Terence McSwiney would have applauded "The Dreamer" or "The Rising of the Moon" as useful national propaganda. The morale of these men was so unassailable that it could survive any attack, and they were quite prepared to go forth to battle with the intention of falling; they were quite ready to join the throng of Cathleen's strong sons and be remembered for ever, not because they fought, but because they fought for a lost cause and died in a forlorn hope. Pearse, of course, has been wilfully misunderstood. He fell back on the immolation idea only when other measures failed at the last moment, and his decision was perfectly sound and has been fully justified. But a nation is not made up of Pearses or McSwineys. The majority, when invited to take up arms with the assurance that they will inevitably fall in defeat (and be remembered for ever) will ask with unanswerable logic: "Then why go?" and that query has been implicit in the Abbey sermon for the last thirty years. The spirit which imbued Pearse and McSwiney was a noble and a chivalrous spirit, but it was not a conquering spirit. "Not those who can inflict most, but those who can suffer most will have the ultimate victory" was the creed of McSwiney, a creed suitable for heroes like himself and Mahatma Gandhi, but an extremely vicious slogan for troops entering battle. And it is a fortunate thing for Ireland that the influence of the Abbey Theatre has been confined to a comparatively small group.

That small group, however, has great importance. From it are drawn the articulate leaders of opinion, the makers of laws, Ministers of State, framers of policy and the higher executives of administration. Public opinion and public morale is very much in the hands of that group. An example of their influence is to be found in the censorship of films. Censorship of films in this country means nothing and is not expected to mean anything, but the holding of a watching brief for the sixth commandment. It would be too much of a digression to comment on how far that function is fulfilled. In other countries a sharp look-out is kept for presentations which might adversely affect national morale. But our film censors do not know what morale is. "The Rising of the Moon" would seem to them excellent national propaganda, simply because the scene was not laid in Hollywood and it is only a short step from "The Rising of the Moon" to "Ourselves Alone," a film which enjoyed a spectacular run in our capital city. The censors who approved this picture probably thought they were doing a service to the country and that the film marked a great national advance. Under similar circumstances in England censors employed by the English Government would have found themselves out of a job. In Italy, Germany or Russia they would have found themselves in jail. That picture represents to the growing generation the history of the I.R.A. A pack of hunted rats, always retreating, never fighting, drunken cowards skulking behind women's petticoats. Here and there is shown a spark of nobility and courage because an enemy entirely devoid of fighting qualities reflects no glory on their opponents and when Imperialists finally crush their foes they find it necessary, for the sake of their own morale, to attribute that modicum of bravery to the vanquished which will make the victory creditable. Probably Italy to-day is full of stories of fanatically brave Abyssinians, exaggerated to make heroes of the Italian soldiers who sprayed them with poison gas. "Ourselves Alone" is quite in the Abbey tradition,

and the Abbey tradition explains the blind and stupid acceptance of it by the Irish people. The same audiences who were grateful for the sorrows of Cathleen Ni Houlihan were grateful for this picture of a foolish and futile handful of imbeciles pitting themselves against the might of an Empire. This is what we, instructed by the Abbey, are telling the next generation about ourselves. What the Abbey said about Robert Emmet we are saying about Cathal Brugha, or we are letting Britain say it. In both cases it is a lie, but such a pleasant sentimental lie that we let it pass. We forget that the rebels were not hunted rebels, but that they were the hunters, gay and light-hearted. We forget that it was the British who were hunted, who did not dare to emerge from their fortresses except in huge numbers armed with steel helmets and protected by tanks, armoured cars and machine-guns; that the very lorries in which they travelled were caged with wire netting, that their morale was so bad that the explosion of a single home-made grenade was enough to send them scurrying back to barracks; that the Black and Tans had to be made half-drunk before they could be dragged out of their posts at all; that the Auxiliary bluff covered a bullet-proof waistcoat, and that the whole country outside a few towns was in the hands of a few thousand I.R.A. whose war equipment would have made an Ethiopian smile, that that handful of "hunted rebels" maintained a central government, a judiciary, a police force, a complete local government system, manufactured their own war material, closed the ports against foreign goods, raised a foreign loan, collected revenue, administered law with scrupulous justice, protected their civilian population from the looters and arsonists who crept from enemy posts in the shadow of Curfew, reduced to a farce government by the mightiest Empire the world has ever seen, and did all these things in the merriest, most care-free manner in the world, without any heroics or flag-waving, and getting a good deal of fun out of the whole business.

That is the true version of history and when that version

is given to the young generation we may begin to believe that the Abbey Theatre has been a harmless influence.

Meantime we will continue to subsidise it.

It is a sad and dreadful reflection that the wheel has gone full circle and that we are sunk again in that slavish torpor which marked the beginning of this century, a time when "The Playboy of the Western World" was the occasion for a riot and "The Rising of the Moon" the signal for prolonged applause. Up to a few years ago O'Casey's plays, all in the Abbey tradition, were still capable of rousing the honest indignation of those who remembered the fighting years here and who instinctively recognised in his work the terrible menace to the morale of Young Ireland. But now "Ourselves Alone," a maudlin mixture of the old-school-tie and Handy Andy, the crudest Imperial and anti-Irish jingo, can hold a Dublin audience entranced for a month!

"It was for this Lord Edward died, and Wolfe Tone nobly bled."

JOHN DOWLING

THE ABBEY THEATRE ATTACKED II

To the observer who cares for the well-being of drama the state of the Abbey Theatre is entirely unsatisfactory. In the first place, it is amazing that the minority which supports literature and the arts in Ireland, should be kept in such ignorance of the inner working of the theatre, its plans and its financial position. The Abbey, unlike the Gate, takes no one into its confidence. It selects plays, many of which are poor, announces them in the press exactly one day before their presentation and expects the public to flock in like sheep into a pen. When theatregoers, lacking any other means of expressing their disapproval of the theatre's work, stay away, the Abbey solicits money from a grudging State in order to continue to give that very fare which keeps the theatre half empty.

It would be far more satisfactory if the Directors met the public once a year and gave an account of their stewardship in the same way as a government faces the representatives of the political party which has voted it into power. Criticism would be answered and suggestions heard, and the announcement and discussion of plans for the coming year would make the theatregoing public feel that they were sharing in some measure in forwarding the cause of drama in Ireland. Nor would those who are anxious about drama find it necessary any longer to try to bring about open discussion by couching their opinions in such belligerent terms as may at last coax the Abbey from its traditional silence and isolation, and sting it into reply.

In the second place, the constitution of the Board of Directors is absurd. One would wish to except Mr. Yeats from all stricture, for all Ireland has not it in its power to repay a fraction of its debt to him; moreover it is generally known that Mr. Yeats does not participate very actively in the management. His work is done, and were he to do no more than to continue to allow his name appear at the head of programmes, he would be giving great service still. Yet there is one fact we must bear constantly in mind. All critics are agreed that, although successful in everything else he touched, Mr. Yeats invariably fails as a dramatist. His plays are a great deal else, but they are seldom good drama. And this, in spite of the fact that no living writer has had such opportunities of perfecting his knowledge of stagecraft. Many writers must envy the man who has been associated with theatrical enterprises for forty years and who has had the absolute control of an active theatre during nearly all that time.

Of the other six directors only one gives tangible evidence of ability to direct a theatre. That is Mr. Robinson, who has an intimate and thorough knowledge of drama. The remaining five are men who have won a measure of distinction in other fields. Two were nominated originally by the State, one of

these a distinguished violinist and a university professor of Spanish ; the other the author of an Irish historical work. The remaining directors may be said briefly to be a poet working in a tradition, whose one attempt at a play was a notable failure, the author of a novel and some short stories, who is at the same time a student of Gaelic, and lastly a prominent politician who has been a Cabinet Minister. The interests represented are so varied that it takes some time for one to realise that these five directors have anything in common, but they have, just one thing, and it is this—that not one of them has ever given any evidence of a knowledge of drama. One may admit with the late George Moore that the drama brings strange birds to roost, but would one ever have imagined that men whose efforts have been in such a variety of other fields, would have been brought together to supervise and pass judgment on a most difficult art and one to which none of them has ever successfully laid his hand. This madness has had disastrous results. One has only to examine the work of the Abbey during the past twelve months to be convinced that the theatre is in a morass.

The third point to be considered is the production of the plays which the directors select for presentation. The direction of the theatre's productions is in the hands of a brilliant young Englishman who is doing his best in the face of well-nigh overwhelming difficulties. Indeed, one must sympathise with Mr. Hunt, standing, as he does, between directors who have no particular qualifications for their position, and a company of players, many of whom through a long and easy course of acting in a particular type of play, the primitive peasant one, have become gnarled and bent over in one direction like the rare trees on our Western seaboard.

One cannot question Mr. Hunt's undoubted ability, but one may well ask whether it was wise that an English producer should have been appointed at all. What Irish literature and life suffer from is an excess of softness. Consider even our pagan mythology. How spongy it is when placed over against

that of Greece or even of Germany. The type of Irish drama is easy comedy. The subject matter is usually trivial, and even if the play runs away and becomes serious for a few moments the audience need never be uneasy, for the author can be relied upon to dissolve each movement in laughter. This constant pandering to the femininity which is such a feature of the Irish character, has been the strongest force in keeping the taste of audiences at its present low level. What is needed generally in Ireland, and particularly in the Irish drama, is hardness. Now, this hardness will not come to us from England where thought is set in a soft mould. Indeed, modern English and Irish theatrical work are in essentials so akin, that Great Britain takes to our plays at once, just as she takes to our easy novelists. It is of the utmost importance to Ireland where thought, although soft, is still fluid and bewildered, that she should escape as far as possible the influence of a country that is cursed with the same sentimentality as herself. We must leave our parish and get into the stream of Mainland culture at all costs. That is why it would have been better to have appointed a producer to the Abbey Theatre from the Mainland of Europe rather than from a neighbouring island. Out of that clash something great might have come for Irish drama, at the very least the discipline would not have been without its fruit.

All that is to be said about the actors employed to appear in plays at the Abbey is that, while they are excellently suited to the primitive 'folk' play, they are, generally speaking, incapable in the sophisticated and elaborate drama which mirrors a more advanced civilisation. Peasant drama must always form a certain proportion of the Abbey's annual programme. It is of historical interest and will continue for a long time to delight simple people. The theatre's main work, however, must be to encourage a drama more in keeping with the twentieth century and with a nation which, although away in a corner, is nevertheless European. The ideal solution would be to send the least amenable of the present company on a permanent tour of

the small towns of Ireland, which in the course of some years they would succeed in bringing to the standard of dramatic appreciation that at present exists in Dublin. In the meantime a new company in Dublin would be raising our standard to a worthier height. Financial considerations probably weigh against such a revolutionary course ; but has the theatre gone with sufficient energy into the possibility of recruiting amateur talent ? It is not necessary always to have mercenaries in a theatre. A scheme which might prove successful, would be the paying of percentage bonuses instead of fixed salaries. At all events, we can have but little sympathy with an argument based on financial considerations. Have we not seen the Gate Theatre start with nothing and achieve so much ? We saw it founded and its own theatre built without the charity of an Englishwoman. The Gate has what the Abbey has not, ability, enthusiasm and youth in its direction. And do we not know only too well that the Abbey itself has alienated the sympathy of our small cultured public, the only source from which financial assistance might have been obtained ? One does not throw money into a grave.

Acting, production, lighting, settings—these things are the frame of drama. It exists without them in the printed page. It will be a sad thing if in trying to effect improvements in these subsidiary arts of the theatre the real source of the sickness continues to be neglected. Everyone in Dublin who cares for drama, must know the root cause of the Abbey's evils. Only seven men refuse to recognise it. The policy and direction of the theatre must be changed. When men of generous mind cannot make a success of a venture they stand aside and surrender control to others who may be able to do so.

Unless a vast improvement is brought about in the Abbey Theatre, and that soon ; unless it can show that it is still a living force in Irish life, that it has an object in view and that the object is a valuable one, there is only one honourable course—the resignation of the entire Directorate.

MERVYN WALL

CATHAL'S FAREWELL TO THE RYE-FIELD

(Written to the Londonderry Air.)

"The autumn sun your shadow 's flung, my Cathal,
Upon the field where now your reaping 's done :
Lo, there ! And, lo ! the reaper's wreath of rushes
Is on your forehead like a kingly crown !"

And I have come to name you King of Connacht,
And bid you where O'Connor's muster grows—
No shadow-king, but one to front the Norman
And rear the standard that all Eire knows !"

"Farewell," he said, "Farewell the field I've sickled,
Farewell, the youths whose backs were bent with mine,
Farewell, the maids whose singing now comes to me—
Bless, saintly Brighid, bless our roofs, our kine !

No Baron's keep shall frown upon your labor,
No pale they'll make to hold our Irish deer :
A true-born scion of Connacht's kings I go now—
My father's brand, this sword, shall lead your axe, your
spear !"

PADRAIC COLUM

POEM

Between rebellion as a private study and the public
Defiance, is simple action only on which will flickers
Catlike, for spring. Whether at nerve-roots is secret
Iron, there's no diviner can tell, only the moment can show.
Simple and unclear moment, on a morning utterly different
And under circumstances different from what you'd expected.

Your flag is public over granite. Gulls fly above it.
Whatever the issue of the battle is, your memory
Is public, for them to pull awry with crooked hands,
Moist eyes. And village reputations will be built on
Inaccurate accounts of your campaign. You're name for orators,
Figure stone-struck beneath damp Dublin sky.

In a delaying action, perhaps, on hillside in remote parish,
Outposts correctly placed, retreat secured to wood, bridge mined
Against pursuit, sniper may sight you carelessly contoured.
Or death may follow years in strait confinement, where diet
Is uniform as ceremony, lacking only fruit.
Or on the barrack square before the sun casts shadow.

Name, subject of all-considered words, praise and blame

Irrelevant, the public talk which sounds the same on hollow
Tongue as true, you'll be with Parnell and with Pearse.
Name aldermen will raise a cheer with, teachers make reference
Oblique in class, and boys and women spin gum of sentiment
On qualities attributed in error.

Man, dweller in mountain huts, possessor of coloured mice,
Skilful in minor manual turns, patron of obscure subjects, of
Gaelic swordsmanship and mediaeval armoury.
The technique of the public man, the masked servilities are
Not for you. Master of military trade, you give
Like Raleigh, Lawrence, Childers, your services but not yourself.

CHARLES DONNELLY

THE NAVIGATOR

Who rages there, whose words stamp upon stone
and what accents assail death?
The bells toll their reasons and my heart also,
the paper roses whimper above my head,
there will be continuity from bed to bed,
an adequate dripping of tepid toneless waters,
not at all a royal progress through the mountains.
Alas ! The dark murmuring of the heart.

After the sea surge, dust, dust unto dust,
nature proposes to each one his natural place ;
the river mist curls slowly around the feet
of homeward men,
all things returning to the first earth.

Swinging low where far-off sirens sound
bronze hands lighten the length of the city.
The air migrates with incandescent birds
caught in the wash of light between the clouds.
Trains are obsessed by distant ends,
hands by hands, eyes by imaged eyes.
The weeds exalt the keel to the sun-set

dying emerald, bound by frail sea-weeds,
while an idle king moves among the long ships.
Smile, O my heart,

and hear, what sound,
cavern bitter and profound, what music
composes visions above the flowered sea.

BRIAN COFFEY

THE BETTER PART

THE kitchen was quiet that night. The young people of the household had gone over the mountain to a wedding, and in their absence the oil-lamps seemed to burn more dimly than usual, and shadows grew in the corners of the room. Only Bean a' Tighe, Fear a' Tighe, and we two were left.

We tried to settle down to our books when the voices died away in the distance, but the silence was more disturbing than the usual chatter. The Fear a' Tighe's gentle movements as he cut tapers from bog-wood, and the chirp of the crickets seemed to intensify the quiet that was making us both restless.

I looked up and the old man caught my glance and smiled. He was reputed to be almost blind, but the quickness of his intuition always amazed me.

"'Tis quiet to-night," he said, "ye'll be able to get on at the books."

"Too quiet," said I.

He smiled again and bent to his task, his old hands hovering about the stained wood like brown Autumn leaves. He seldom spoke, expressing himself only through his work. Though he was over eighty, and had partly lost his sight, we often came upon him on his knees in a tilled field patiently weeding the long furrows, or met him coming down the hill-side with a load of brushwood for the fire, or overtook him on the road at sunset driving the cows home for milking. His back was stooped from labour, his hands knotted and dry, his steps slow and unsteady, but even at the fall of night he found occupation, and, drawing into the fire with his pile of bog-wood would pass the time patiently cutting and breaking till he retired. He had no part in the running of the farm now, his capable wife and son saw to all that, he just moved busily, unobtrusively, towards the grave, and whether the touch of the brown earth, the turf, and the old wood he coaxed from the bog brought him memories of more vigorous days, or gently reminded him of heaven I cannot tell, but the old man's face wore always a look of great peace and sweetness.

Bean-a'-Tighe came in. The door banged behind her, and the swish of her skirts as she strode to the fire-place sent a little breeze round the room.

"'Twill be a bad night on the mountain," she said, "the rain is coming."

She broke a stick across her knee, it snapped with a noise like a pistol-shot. The old man gathered up his sticks, and moved

to the door with a gentle good-night blessing. His wife aided our response with her sonorous Gaelic as she watched him to the door.

They were an interesting pair. Sometimes it seemed to me that she had usurped his place, and at other times I used to think his gentle influence guided her at every step. Sometimes, too, I called them Martha and Mary in my own mind ; for the old man seemed to have chosen ' the better part ' to a greater extent than was made necessary by his age or infirmity.

Bean-a'-Tighe moved about the room for a little while putting things to rights. Her step was always purposeful and vigorous ; she ruled the servant-girls with a rod of iron, and about her face there was a certain lack of mobility, a rigidity that gave an impression of hardness.

'We applied ourselves to our books with a diligence that on my part was pure affectation ; for I was more interested in the old woman than in my work. She was restless to-night ; not quite at ease. She straightened the little curtain at the window, and as she did so I fancied she peered out into the gloom. Then she turned and caught me looking at her.

" Do you never sit down, a Van-a'-Tighe ? "

It was a moment before she answered.

" Faith, I'm as fond of it as the rest ! But look, you wouldn't have time here, there's always something to be done."

" Come along," I invited, closing my book and drawing a chair to the hearth.

She sat on it, right in front of the fire, and I slipped another chair into the corner where I could watch her face lit up by the flames of the blazing turf. My friend drew in to the fire, too, and a little silence followed. Then the Bean-a'-Tighe looked from one of us to the other with a gleam of humour in her eyes.

" 'Tis easy to put ye off them books."

" We've been working all day, it's time to put them away now and let all we have learned sink in," said Katherine.

" Ah ! " nodded the old woman, "'tis the thrue word for ye, the thrue word then. 'Tis not the books at all that matter, but the thing that's in your head, the thought like. Ye can't always have thim books with ye when ye want what's in them."

" The thought." Katherine was arrested by the word and leaned forward until the firelight lit up her eager, young face in vivid contrast with the strong lined face that the Bean-a'-Tighe turned to her as she spoke. " The thought's the thing all right. If we knew how to think,—I wonder——"

Bean-a'-Tighe turned to the fire, her brows drawn together in a frown, and Katherine's face disappeared from my range

of vision, but I could still hear her murmuring as if she were trying to straighten to her own satisfaction the idea she had so imperfectly expressed. But all I caught was—"—Right thinking—, if we could remember,——" and then the frank admission, "I'm afraid I don't know exactly what I mean, but I once heard a Missioner say that if people really thought, there'd be no sin in the world."

The old country-woman's face had lost its puzzled expression. She nodded her head. "Ah—thinkin,' thinkin' ! 'Tis not for everyone, a chroidhe, to be thinkin'. An' missioners ! A wirra !" Her hands rose and fell upon her aproned lap in time to the nod of her head.

"Do you have missions here ?" I asked. The question was rhetorical ; I knew there was a story coming from the way she leaned forward in her chair and fixed her eyes on the glowing heart of the fire.

"The last time we had a Mission," she began, in the slow English of one to whom it is a foreign language," was eight years ago, in the month of April,—an' a fine April it was too. There were two priests in it. I don't know what order they were, they weren't the Brown Habit priests, an' they weren't the Dominican Fathers, because Johnnie Cahill's mother tell me last Sunday that 'tis a white robe they wear—Poor Johnnie ! The crater ! He was a nice little boy. But the Missioners I was tellin' ye about—whatever they were, I can tell ye they put the heart across in half the countryside. The small priest wasn't so bad, but when the tall, stout one got into the pulpit, you'd think he'd take the roof off on damnation an' death, God bless an' protect us.

"Well, the whole side of the mountain used to gather into that church every night for a fortnight. 'Twas a great sight to see them comin' in of an' evening, some of them after walking seven an' eight miles. An' they'd take the lonely road back through the night—an' 'twas what you said about thinkin', awhile now, a chailin, that put it in me mind at all,—'tis like there was many a one that hadn't thought for a good long time, had his mind stirred up like, an' had quare thoughts for company on the way home.

"There were boys and girls that had been out in the 'trouble,' God help us, 'twas innocent they all were-maybe. But when people gets thinkin' of what's over an' done with for years, it makes 'em fanciful.

"Then there was Mary Hegarty, God rest her soul. A fine young woman, an' the mother of three little children,—shure

she's just as well off, her husband wasn't long consolin' himself. God bless him, an' he's no bargain to anybody ! But 'twas on the last day of the Mission she was bringin' in the thrap, an', whatever happened, no one ever got the rights of it,—the pony bolted. Jimmie, that's the husband, was pitched fine an' soft into the ditch. I believe he was like an ol' sow when they got him out with the mud stickin' all over him, an' he shoutin' blue murther that he was kilt, an' nothing worse than a bruise on his whole body.

"But poor Mary ! God between us an' all harm ! 'Twas like as how she held on to the reins. I didn't go down to see her at all, but I heard tell that she hadn't a thrace of the face on her after the way she was dragged along the road. Ah ! God help us ! But it was a hard death, an' a hard sight for a young man.

"Our Eamon it was that picked her up. He was the first to catch up with her after the reins broke. She didn't live at all, God have mercy on her. But shure she was prepared, she'd been to confession the night before. But the quare thing was that the priest who opened the Mission said that someone would be called before the year was out, maybe before the Mission was out, an' everyone brought that to memory that morning I promise you."

One of the lamps was smoking, and Katherine went to tend it but only succeeded in quenching it. The other burned dimly and the Bean-a'-Tighe's voice went on even and low, almost as if she had forgotten us, except that now and again, she turned for a moment to one or other, and as her tale unfolded we learned how some of those lines had become engraved upon her face.

"We knew he was troubled. Small blame to him ! When he got beside her on his knees he fainted as dead as a door-nail. One of the people comin' along the road gave him a sup of whiskey, and he came in to Mass with the rest of us. Then he got sort of wake in the chapel an' I saw one of the lads go out with him, and come in again by himself. That would be the beginning of it.

"After a while then he got to be silent an' mutterin' to himself. The others used to be blackguarding him about it, an' I told them to lave him alone an' not be taking any notice. But I suppose they used to be gettin' on to him behind me back. Anyway, one mornin', 'twas early in June, the old man an' meself were eating our breakfast when he came downstairs. Me heart stopped still when he came in at the door there. His clothes weren't buttoned on him right even, an' the two eyes

of him like one that would be after wakin' up sudden. He didn't speak at all, only stood there staring at us as if he'd never seen us before.

"The old man had his back to him, an' I gave him the beck not to turn round. Then I let on there wasn't anything out of the way at all. 'Will you have a cup of tay?' says I to him.

"'No,' says he, an' his voice was sort of low down. ' 'Tis no use,' says he, 'I'm damned.' "

The old woman made the sign of the cross. "God between us and all harm, I knew then he was out of his mind." Her voice was steady, too steady, but her fingers were knotted together on her check-aproned lap.

"His father turned round to him then,—he always has the soft word,—'Shure, have your tay anyway, a vic,' he says.

"'Is it to feed the devil that's inside of me ye want?' shouts the lad.

"Just before he turned that on the father, Sean came in at the door behind him. Shure Sean hadn't much sense, God help him, an' maybe he used to think 'twas shapin' the other fellow was,—but, anyhow, he bounces into the middle of the kitchen.

"'The devil of laziness 'tis that's in ye,' he says, 'an' begobs 'tishn't dyin' for want of sleep he'll be!' " an' with that he gives poor Eamon a push with his fist, just in a joking way, ye know, not maning to hurt or harm him."

"Well, 'twas like as if he dropped a bomb, or let a kick at an angry dog. The other squared up to him,—God spare ye from ever seeing the like,—'I'll kill you,' he says, and he screaming, screaming."

The old woman's voice dropped to a whisper. I believe she had forgotten us and could see her two children in the heart of the glowing turf.

"I'm damned," says he, "and I might as well earn me eternal torments."

"God between us an' all harm, there was a crowbar in the corner,—Mike had been fixin' the pipe of the fire,—he lept to it before the shtand had gone out of us, an' up with it. And the next thing I see was Sean an' he lyin' on the floor an' the blood pumping out of him.

"It was only the mercy of God saved him. But shure I thought he was kilt, an' I thought he'd kill the old man too. But the sight of the blood and the lad stretched took a start out of him, and he dropped the crowbar, an' sat down to the fire.

"They took him away that evening. We used to go up to see him often, and Father Mac,—that's the Parish Priest,—would

take a run up there in his car sometimes. But he had the same story always.

" 'There's no hope for me,' he'd say, an' nothing would change him on it. Ah ! God help us, an' leave their senses to everybody."

" But he was never again violent-like, an' after he being very quiet an' steady for a bit, he started to be doin' penances. Prayin' he'd be, an' fasting, an' the Rosary always between his fingers. An' the end of it was, they said he was all right and they'd have to discharge him.

" We got Dan Shea's car to bring him home. 'Twas about this time of year an' the evening closed in wet an' windy. I told Sean to keep the strangers out that night, an' it was quiet like this when we arrived. Maire, and Bid,—that's one ye don't know, she went out to the States since,—an' Sean and Tadhg were here, and the girls had the place very nice. I was wrong about the time of the year, it was later than this, because Bid had a bowl of red berry holly on the table. She was always for fal-dals of that sort.

" Well, in we came, and they all did their best for him, God bless them. Poor Sean ! He was tryin' to look all aise, an' at the same minute, if Eamon looked crooked at him he'd have run with his life. As for Eamon, he sat in to the corner quiet enough, an' when the tay was ready he came to the table with the rest of us. He didn't say much, but shure the others made up for that. An', do you know, I was thinkin' in a kind of way that 'twas fine to have the whole scata round the table again. Ah ! God help us !

" When they'd had their nuff, the old man rose up an' went to the fire. The girls were settin' the place to rights, an' Eamon sat on with his knees under the table.

" 'Draw up to the fire, boy,' says I to him.

" He got up as if he didn't half want to, an' then he went over to where his coat was hangin' on the hook.

" 'That was a good tay, he says, 'I thank ye, an' now I must be putting the road over me."

" I thought it was raving again he was, until I looked into his eyes, but they were too quiet, there was no madness in them. —I suppose I ought to say thank God,—but shure there's more than one kind of madness in it.

" 'Where would you be goin' at this hour of the night ? ' says I. "Is it back to the 'Sylum ?"

" 'No,' says he, 'tis not. I'm in me right mind now' I can see me duty out before me. I'm goin,' says he, 'where the

Lord went to find His Own,'—just like that he said it, like a priest would be preaching from the pulpit. 'I'm going into the highways and the byways.' An' with that, he turned an' off with him out the door, into the storm of wind an' rain that was patterin' on the windows, like 'tis to-night, only worse.

"God knows I'm an old woman now, but still an' all, you couldn't call me slow. But I was like one that couldn't move. I was stuck into the chair, an' me boy goin' from me onto the roads like that.

" 'Stop him,' says I to the father.

" 'Lave him alone, he'll come back again,' he says. He's ever one to take a thing quiet.

" 'Go after him, Sean,' says I. 'In God's name don't let him out on a night like this.' But would he stir? 'Twasn't want of nature in him, but afraid he was. God preserve us ! Afraid of his own brother !

"An' he went from us like that," she finished in her level tones, and only the set old face, and the polished knuckles told how deeply poignant were the memories stirred up by her tale.

Katherine had disappeared into the shadows ; the lamp shed a low yellow radiance about the other end of the room, and we were wrapped about in the red twilight of the hollow fire.

I was intensely anxious to hear the end of the story, but uncertain how to question. I said something banal. Katherine was wiser, she leaned over and shattered the fire with a few sods of turf, but as she did so I saw, by the leaping flame, her hand rest for a moment on the Bean-a'-Tighe's.

The old woman spoke again almost in a whisper. The hint of pain in her voice was like a violin accompaniment transcending the passion of a singer.

"Six years roaming the roads of Ireland, if that's not penance enough for him !—An' for his mother ! Six years ! An' twice he came within five mile of us. Everyone do be very kind to him." She turned to me and her voice was scarcely audible. "Last night he was below in Connor's. 'Tis little more than eight miles from here. Kathleen drove over to tell me to-day. She got on to him for not comin' home."

Her voice went on, but what she was saying I had no idea. I knew now why she had worn that air of expectancy all the evening.

We sat there quietly for some time. I don't know exactly how long : it may have been half-an-hour ; it may have been ten minutes. Then we heard heavy footsteps outside. Katherine's face popped into the firelight ; she looked scared. Bean-a'-Tighe was rigid.

There was no knock ; the door opened, and he stood under the feeble lamplight, tall, ragged, bearded. His eyes and cheeks were hollow ; his mouth thin but soft, and there was no madness in his face, only a peaceful weariness. He was like his father, I reflected. And yet ! Then I saw that the likeness was rather of character than of feature ; he had the tolerance, the serenity, the peace of resigned old age in his face. He was old.

The mother spoke before he did. " Is that you, Eamon ? " was all she said.

" Yes." He advanced into the fire-light, looked without curiosity at Katherine and me, and then sat down on the settle.

" God be thanked, that steered you home, a vic," she whispered. And then with a return of her usual briskness, " Look at that lamp, now ! " And she bustled about till the kitchen was bright again.

We had tea and they spoke but little to each other. We lit our candles immediately afterwards, and bade them good-night. My room was at the turn of the stairs, Katherine's a few steps farther on. Her candle was blown out at the turn, and she paused to rekindle it at mine.

" Have you a key to your door ? " she asked.

" Don't be childish," I said sharply.

I could hear the murmur of voices downstairs for a long time after I went to bed, then I went to sleep and it was seven when I awoke. After a few minutes I remembered, and jumped out of bed. Katherine was sleeping peacefully next door, and I went down alone.

The rain was pouring down in torrents. The young people had not yet returned from the dance. Fear-a'-Tighe was doing something with a hammer in the chimney corner. He smiled up at me, serenely, graciously.

" You're up early, a chailin."

" Yes," I replied abstractedly. " Where was Bean-a'-Tighe ? Where was Eamon ? Fear-a'-Tighe gathered up his tools.

" Ye had a quare visitor last night," he said over his shoulder, and gave a little cackling laugh as he went out.

" Old people should never laugh," I thought.

Bean a' Tighe came in. Her walk was purposeful and the swish of her skirt sent a little breeze around the kitchen. She turned to me a pair of eyes that were red and washed out with weeping.

" He slept in the barn last night," she said, " and he was gone before I woke."

Barney, the dog, put his nose round the door. " Get out ye

devil ye," she shouted. Her hand rose and dropped clenched at her side. She stood like that for a moment, then turned and picked up an egg.

"Boiled, or fried?" she asked in her usual, rather hard voice.

"Boiled, please," I replied.

D. D. O'MAHONY

A SHORT SHORT STORY

A STUDENT'S DANCE

I.

HE lay in the sun beside a holly-crowned, whitewashed wall, against which green fields, white daisies, and yellow dandelions flowed like a coloured sea, and he dreamed. The holly gleamed like a coil of serpents above his head, and a willow wren called across the stillness. He dreamed of the night before. At three o'clock that morning he had come home through lamplit, deserted streets from the Conferring Dance in the College. The memory of it made him bite his nails.

The glare hit his eyes as he left the cloakroom and walked upstairs to the Aula Maxima where the dance was being held. Half-blinded, his mind erect in fear, he slid down the corridor, down the backstairs to the cloakroom again, and would have remained there for the rest of the night democratising with the porters and fingering his overcoat for something he wasn't looking for at all, had not a noisy bunch of students—Third-year Medicals—arrived, behind which barrage he mounted the main staircase once more and stood gazing in at the dancers. It was here, talking to O'Donnell, that he caught the first indications of it. People were grinning and eyeing at him derogatively. In a big mirror he saw the pallor of his face, the troubled eyes, the nervous uncertainty of his movements, and felt ready to bolt, but controlling himself he stayed watching the dancing and talking to O'Donnell. One face leaped out of the maze of faces and quivered kaleidoscopic before him. It was the face of Rona O'Malley. He admired her terribly and wanted her, but what could he do? He was too frightened. In his distress his hands went clammy; and as he mooched down the corridor a queer thought jerked into his mind like a

butterfly into a prison, and he saw himself wandering bare-headed through the fields at home, through the golden evening where leaves spun down, or sitting by the fire, a fragrant stillness vigilling while he read This was the other, the life that was his by right of temperament. He wished to God he had not come into this place of delirium. Stuffing his hands into his pockets, hurriedly taking them out again, still moving round at the back of the laughing crowd, he encountered fellow students and did his best to dip and grin, but he couldn't manage his mouth: it wouldn't slit the right way for a smile.

Three girls were watching him, hoping to be asked to dance. He knew them. They were Science. Couldn't they leave him alone? Their looks were disparaging, like all the others. He turned his back on them and walked away.

"Who do you say he is?" asked one.

"Oh, So-and-So' You know, he poses as a cynic and has to look bored."

The next dance was an Irish dance. Someone in the brightness rushed at him, caught his arms and dragged him into a group of girls. He was introduced to four, but heard no names and made no selection. He asked them all to dance, and found himself identified with one with a big mouth that kept giggling. An Cur Seasuir Deag. He walked with her into the brilliantly lighted hall, feeling absurd. The sets were forming. He tried to make conversation, but she could only giggle so he gave it up. Besides, what could he have talked about? He was relieved when the dance began. The exercise warmed him and when the music stopped, he excused himself and made off hot and out of breath.

He began to smoke; not that he wanted to, but because it kept his hands employed and his mouth. It gave him courage, too. He felt a sudden recklessness. Students he had hitherto passed by, he now stopped and shook hands with, whether they liked it or not; he talked loudly, ostentatiously, with expletive energy: it was part of the ritual; and, indeed, he was beginning to think he was getting on pretty well, when, striking across the white spell, his frightened eyes met again the face which had troubled him before.

II.

As the night proceeded the flutter of colour and all the little jags of experience clouded the mirror of consciousness so that he began to tire; and always he passed up and down the corridor outside the ballroom, lighting endless cigarettes, throwing

them away, or standing burdened with the effort of making his facial expression reflect a proper compatability with his surroundings.

At last hunger attacked him. He stood monosyllabbling with O'Donnell again, trying to repel a weakness which was slowly reducing him to imbecility, but incapable of summoning courage enough to take a girl down to supper, or to go down to the buffet alone; so he twitched his fingers and smoked, stood on one foot and then another, and waited. But his stomach decided him. It began to gnaw. Suddenly he broke away from O'Donnell, hurried downstairs to the supper room and, unpartnered, acting a lie which suggested itself as he crossed the threshold, went down among the laughing groups looking for—O'Donnell. He halted those carrying cups—and saucers—of tea to waiting partners, shoved his face into circles of friends, and into some that weren't, enquiring if they knew where he was. The chief thing was to be busy, to have a purpose, to have something to do. As he made for the door murmuring surprise at the failure of his quest, the corner of his eye caught a pinhead of whiteness, and he turned and met the face that was troubling him all night. Hardly knowing what he did, he approached the girl and enquired if she perhaps had seen O'Donnell. Her answer didn't matter, and he turned away.

But it was then that he made the most humiliating discovery of the night, the one which was to drive him home. What was the use of his jack-acting? Everybody there knew what he was at. Even the waitresses. They had been watching him all the time; they knew the lie he had acted coming in, knew the reason for his excessive cigarette smoking, his loud talk, his frightened look. They knew more. They knew the whole business about himself and Rona O'Malley, knew he liked her and wanted her. Someone must have told them. It was all up. As he asked for coffee he saw them nudge each other and smile and meet further down the long table and peep and nudge and smile again. Not daring to look anywhere he turned his back to where Rona was—she had returned to the ballroom long before—his shoulder to a whispering group—which was discussing someone's dress—and fixing his eye on his cup, ate and drank until he was full. What mattered if they were all watching him, or that he swallowed four cups instead of one, and used his saucer as a finger bowl? Nothing. He got his coffee.

Then he was finished and had only to walk out like anybody else. But how in God's name? He stared the tablecloth in front

of him, and the glassware, and the desserts and jellies. The childish suggestion occurred of dashing headlong for the door, but he overcame it and deliberately walked across the room, one shoulder up and the other down. His desperation spurred him on. He stopped two students and displayed an unlit cigarette. They lit a match and he exchanged cigarettes with them and all three moved out together.

Upstairs again at the door of the ballroom someone shoved through the throng and said "Hello!" It was Arthur Ryan, who had introduced him to the girl with the big mouth. In panic lest Ryan had further designs on him he suddenly asked a girl beside him to dance. She looked surprised but pleased, and they went into the blaring music. As they danced, Rona danced past him once, twice, three times, and smiled. More pity. He didn't want her pity. When the dance was over he got rid of his partner and rejoined the crowd in the corridor. Something made him turn. Two dark eyes were fixed on him in protest.

"Well, Rona," he said.

His mind in painful confusion he went over. She ignored her partner and asked him to sit beside her. He did so, convinced that it was a gross blunder in tactics; but it wasn't. He didn't talk; he couldn't, for he was paralysed with fear; he just sat, stunned with passion, longing to put his arms round her, and kiss her. A prospecting partner for the next dance arrived. Rona waited. He gave no sign—he couldn't. She was piqued and told the newcomer she would dance, then she said she wouldn't; then she rose and left him.

Lighting his last cigarette he sat on, thinking of different things; of Rona O'Malley and how she stirred him; of his hands and how ugly they were; of his stomach and its queasiness; of how beautiful sleep was and how akin to death. Then, he stood up feeling lightheaded, reached the cloakroom, got his coat, overtipped the porters because he was afraid not to, and hurried home.

He lay in the sun beside a holly-crowned, whitewashed wall, against which green fields, white daisies, and yellow dandelions flowed like a coloured sea, and he dreamed. The holly gleamed like a coil of serpents above his head and a willow wren called across the stillness.

ART

THE NATIONAL GALLERY AGAIN

A CROP of challenges, two of which were published here last month, have driven the Editors of IRELAND TO-DAY to insist that this feature substantiate its criticism of the National Gallery. It seems necessary also to dispel a vague suggestion that an agitation is contemplated to have all our Rembrandts burned by the public hangman because they were not *déanta i n-Eirinn*.

The argument which roused the garrison to arms was that the Gallery was never intended for the Irish public, that its purpose has been to keep the arts exclusive to a class which is hostile to all that the Irish people hold dear, that it has deliberately made manifest that hostility and so chilled as far as it could any interest in the arts among the people of Ireland and that, except in pursuing such a policy, it has shown no continuity of taste or purpose.

Entrance to the Gallery is through the National Portrait Collection, and strutting O or swaggering Mac might expect to find himself here in an Irish Pantheon. He does not (ungrateful dog) include, in such a Pantheon, liberal politicians with Irish sympathies or humanitarians or scholars interested in Celtic Archaeology and, believe it or not, he is quite unmoved by Peg Woffington and David Garrick, though he can tolerate the leaven of these which is to be found there. He is thinking of the heroes of this Nation from the sixteenth century onwards, a long, long crowded gallery of Gaelic gods, to put it bluntly, the men who fought under his flag "because they could not bear to see the Red above the Green."

Remembering the pictures of some of these heroes in a few of his school-books, he might expect to meet some friends in his National Gallery, instead of which he finds himself in a rogues' gallery, and if his progress through these rooms leaves any doubt in the mind of swaggering Mac or strutting O as to what kind of Nationality or history is portrayed there, he is an insensitive soul. The gallery is the apotheosis of his conquerors.

If Mr. MacGreevy were to find the walls of the Louvre covered with portraits of German army officers and if Mr. McGuire were to find the English National Gallery full of portraits of Frenchmen and Spaniards, surely they would be faintly surprised. If they discovered throngs of Parisians and Cockneys, respectively, congratulating themselves on these possessions they would be still more surprised. Would they not assume that a couple of conquests had taken place unnoticed, and would they not be right?

Let us return to O (or Mac), now thoroughly in his place, and ask: "What are our treasures?" He will reply: "The portraits of Fitzgerald, Casement and Rory O'Connor." Without a step ladder and a pocket torch he will not have discovered the death masks of Emmet and Tone. This is not an exaggeration, it is the simple truth. They are in utter darkness, like the portrait of Charles Wogan, a minor treasure which he might like to see. He can hardly be expected to enthuse about King William of glorious memory, who appears

so often in the Gallery that he seems to be everywhere one turns, or that monarch's consort, or the Duke of Wellington or Sir Walter Raleigh or Ginkell or Oliver Cromwell (we have two portraits of this famous Irishman) or Richard Cromwell or Queen Elizabeth or Bloody Mary or Anne Boleyn or the long, dreary string of English Viceroy, Bishops, Generals, Lords Chancellors and Castle Hacks, Earls of this and Dukes of that, who have warred against the Irish People and battered on the Irish People for the last 400 years. Drawing his attention to the copy of Comerford's drawing of Emmett or the miniature of Lord Edward will not shake his conviction that he is in enemy country, where he is decidedly unwelcome.

And before we leave the portraits, what is the meaning of the following entry in the 1932 catalogue:—

"Portrait of Dr. Troy, R.C. Archbishop of Dublin."

Space does not permit of any exhaustive study of the rest of the Collection, which may be divided roughly into two classes—Irish and International. The latter is rightly the pride of the gallery and includes a number of masterpieces, but to suggest that it shows a continuity of taste or sound judgment is absurd. It needs no critical taste to acquire a Rembrandt, a Goya or a Gainsborough, and except under the directorship of Hugh Lane the Gallery has sought to acquire only works by masters who have won general approval or works which can be justified under the convenient title of "examples." This caution has not prevented the cellars from being crammed with mistakes (like most galleries, perhaps), and while it must, in fairness, be admitted that aesthetic judgment is a personal thing, it would be easy to contend, if not to prove, that where critical judgment has been relied on the result has been, as often as not, doubtful. For instance, Orpen's "Wash-house," is a masterpiece. Vermeer could hardly have bettered the tender profile of the girl bending over the tub and even the rather clumsy figure at the back cannot spoil it. This is Orpen at his best. The small nude in sunlight by the same artist is a delight, but "The Knacker's Yard" is Orpen at his very worst, and the last two were acquired together, evidently in a frenzy to get any Orpens, at any price, shortly after his death.

Again, it must be admitted that taste is subjective, but there are certain standards which can be applied by any intelligent person. The Breughel, which appeared a few years ago in the Gallery, is not only vile as a work of art—obscenity can never be great art—but it is an affront to Christian morality, and its continued exhibition is in derision of the moral code recognised in this country.

As for the section devoted to Irish artists, after eighty years of collecting it can only be described as disgraceful. One does not know where to begin talking of it.

When Dr. Bodkin was director, the Gallery acquired "The Liffey Swim," a picture in the *later* manner of Jack Yeats. This was the second occasion on which the gallery's rule excluding living artists was broken. Hone was

the first who ever burst into that silent sea. Now there are about fifteen Osbornes in the collection and this is how Dr. Bodkin compares Osborne and the *earlier* Yeats in his book, "Four Irish Landscape Painters":—"The study of Osborne's work discovers nothing distinctively Irish in its author He was what a Sinn Feiner would probably contemptuously describe as 'a West Briton' His peasants . . . are not nearly so Irish nor so romantic as those painted by Mr. Yeats in their present-day suits of shoddy tweed."

Although many would dispute this opinion, it must be accepted as the official one, and if the rule excluding living artists was to be broken, it seems strange that no attempt was made to secure at least one example of the earlier Yeats, whom the Director of the Gallery considered so Irish and so romantic, as an antidote to the dozen Osbornes which he considered so alien.

The omission of the late Patrick Tuohy, R.H.A., is simply shocking. The Academy exhibited a selection of his paintings, in memoriam, the year he died, and a remarkable posthumous exhibition of his work was also held in Dublin. The merit of his painting is beyond dispute and his subjects were native. The plain truth is that they were too native.

A few days ago it was announced in the Press that a number of paintings by the late Countess Markievicz had been secured by—the Museum ! Could, we not afford to squeeze just one, say the very best, into the Gallery. True Countess Markievicz was not a very great artist, but, surely, this is one case where the policy of collecting "examples," instead of masterpieces, might be applied, when we consider how unblushingly it is applied to the rest of the collection.

JOHN DOWLING

THE STUDENTS' EXHIBITION

THE work of the students of the Metropolitan School exhibited at the Arts' Club last month showed an almost unsuspected vitality and promised that when the present generation of Irish artists die of starvation other optimists will be qualified to take their place. About thirty-five students contributed nearly one hundred pictures, and hardly a single one of them failed to show sincerity and a capacity for work, the two most desirable qualities in such an exhibition.

The water colours showed a higher standard of achievement than the oils, with a few exceptions, and this may be due to a medium which, while demanding no less skill, is definitely less complex. Not for nothing are watercolours called "drawings," and it is safe to say that the Dublin School is far stronger in drawing than painting. The modernist trend to a disregard of technique is unduly attractive here, where we are not fortified by a solid continuous tradition of craftsmanship. Such an inheritance is to be found among our coach-painters and sign-writers, who still retain a guild tradition, but it is not so

(continued on page 68)

MUSIC

CELEBRITY CONCERT : THEATRE ROYAL, DUBLIN

Eva Turner, Sabine Kalter, Dion Borgioli, John Brownlee.

This concert was advertised as being a "Grand Opera programme," and while I am not particularly enamoured of operatic arias divorced from their dramatic context, and accompanied by a piano, yet, I was interested in seeing how the various problems attendant upon such a presentation were solved or shelved. I found the lion's share of the programme devoted to Verdi—perhaps the best solution of many difficulties—while Donizetti, Rossini, Gounod, Massenet, Mozart and Rimsky-Korsakoff were duly remembered.

Of the various performances, that of John Brownlee appealed to me most, his dignified singing with Miss Turner of the duet *Ciel, mio Padre* from *Aida* and his *Vision fugitive* from Massenet's *Herodiade* being the peak points of his singing; good diction and rhythmic stability added to our pleasure. The most acceptable of Dion Borgioli's numbers I thought to be Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Chanson Indoue*; a technical and artistic achievement. I had already some acquaintance with this singer through the radio and gramophone, and was somewhat disappointed with the quality of his voice, comparing it with these previous experiences; the singer, however, seemed to be troubled with a cold, sufficiently so to account for this discrepancy. Sabine Kalter, a brilliant dramatic contralto, with a voice of great power and range, gave us the somewhat hackneyed *O Don Fatale* from Verdi's *Don Carlos*—a good performance. Last, if not least, Miss Eva Turner sang Verdi's *Pace, Pace, mio Dio* and the Jewel Song from *Faust*. I thought the best performance of this fine, dramatic soprano was in her partnership with John Brownlee in the *Aida* duet. The final item of the concert was the quartet from *Rigoletto*. It was somewhat of a relief to the general programme to hear this concerted number, but, although served by four fine voices, the result could hardly be called a quartet—various problems of ensemble not being satisfactorily solved. Ivor Newton, at the piano, did all a pianist could be expected to do with the various orchestral accompaniments, and it is in no sense a criticism of his excellent work to say that one continually sought sub-consciously the weight and colour of an orchestra. The attendance was sparse—most undeservedly so.

ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY'S RECITALS

Elizabeth Schumann.

What is one to say of Madame Schumann, except, perhaps, that she "did of grace all that was grace?" We should be indebted to her if she sang scales, only; however, we were dealt no such meagre sustenance and had the luxury of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Wolff as Madame Schumann can sing them. (It is rather a pity that for recitals of this type and importance the Royal Dublin Society do not issue with their usual programmes literal translations of the lesser known songs, at any rate; this is a necessity to proper appreciation). Mr. George Reeves at the piano fully deserved Mme. Schumann's

acknowledgment of his valuable assistance. Finally, I should like to remark that I heard a song at this recital, an *Ave Maria* by Schubert, which had a faint resemblance to a song of the same name that I have heard sung here many, many times. I can only hope that the singers responsible for these impositions were present and heard Mme. Schumann.

The Isolde Menges String Sextet.

While it cannot be said that musically or aesthetically the string sextet as a combination is as satisfying as the string quartet (the predominance of the darker colourings and the weight due to the inclusion of two violas and two 'celli unduly thickening the lower and middle of the ensemble) yet so rare are our opportunities for hearing such a combination, that a much less satisfactory performance than that given by this ensemble would be gladly received. At this recital the least satisfactory playing came from the violins, whose tone was hard—though this was forgotten and forgiven; but in "duet" work a persistent vibrato of different intensity continually affected pitch, particularly when the higher positions on the instruments were being used. This, though a small matter and one easily rectified, was irritating. I thought the ensemble's best performance was that of Brahms's B flat Sextet, op. 18—the vigorous, sweeping style cultivated by the players being well suited to its content. If the work, as usual, did not live intensely in all its members—in sections of the Andante, for instance, no blame for this may be imputed to the performers. Mozart's quintet in G minor (K. 516)—I am always startled by its oblique references to his G minor symphony—hardly benefited by this vigorous treatment. I, personally, prefer more quiet intensity than was accorded it; but if one did not agree at all points with the reading given, it could at least be realized that coherent thought lay behind the performance. The treatment in some strange way emphasised the "minor" quality of the work and made one wonder afresh that anyone could ever have thought Mozart a "drawing-room" composer. A performance of a sextet by Frank Bridge was also given.

Dorothy Stokes and Alice Yoakley—Two Pianos.

Renee Flynn and Dorothy Griffith—Vocal Duets.

Some months ago Professor Fleischmann in an article, stressed the necessity for some effort in Ireland to make music an "economic proposition" for Irish executants. Apart altogether from the quality of the programme provided by these ladies one was glad to see some sign of appreciation for this view of the matter from the Royal Dublin Society.

The two pianists excel technically—a special word of praise must be given their rhythmic stability—a quality lacking in most pianists. I thought their best performance came with the Bach sonata in E flat, even if the emotional content of the Adagio was not realised. Otherwise the performance was smooth, clean, and well balanced—a pleasure to hear.

In spite of all the care taken, the vocal duets could not be reckoned an unqualified success: the blame lies not on the singers, but, on the great difference in timbre between the two voices. Miss Flynn's voice is one of exceeding clarity

crystal clear in its tones ; Miss Griffith's voice is many shades darker and in the lower register lacks the power of her partner's voice. In Schumann's *Das Glück*, for instance, I could hear Miss Flynn and the piano (Miss Coyle was the efficient accompanist), but the second vocal line in many places was inaudible where I sat. This sounds rather harsh and might give the impression that the vocal recital was a failure. Such an impression would be incorrect. There were many things, all through an interesting programme—we journeyed from Purcell to Humperdinck—that “ministered well to our content,” and left us debtors to these ladies.

BROADCAST SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Fifth Concert.—Schumann Symphony in E flat. Conductor : Professor Weaving.

Sixth Concert.—Brahm's Symphony in E minor. Conductor : Dr. Vincent O'Brien.

Any criticism of these two concerts would be but a repetition of earlier critiques. All that may be said is that both orchestra and conductors did what could be done under the circumstances—or perhaps in spite of the circumstances of insufficient rehearsal. Only when it is realized that satisfactory performances of works of this calibre cannot be achieved, until such works are part of the repertoire of a standing symphony orchestra—only then can adequate readings be expected.

I regret that I was unable to hear two recent performances, broadcast from Cork—a broadcast by the Killumney Gaelic Choir, conducted by Mr. Pilib O Laoghaire, and a relay of an orchestral concert from University College, Cork, featuring Haydn's “Clock” symphony and Tschaiakowsky's overture, “Romeo and Juliet,” conducted by Professor Fleischmann. I regret my inability all the more, as, of both performances, I have had good report.

DUBLIN PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY CONCERT.

Second of Series. Conductor : Turner Huggard.

This concert featured the combined choir and orchestra of the Society in Mendelssohn's Oratorio, *Elijah*, and was presented in the Metropolitan Hall, Dublin. Perhaps the first remark I should like to set down is this—that if or when the people of Ireland become sufficiently demented to make me Dictator, my first ukase will be one directing that all violinists using wire E strings shall be put to the torture. I am not exaggerating when I say that sometimes the effect produced by the violins at this concert was a “crunching” sound, as if match-boxes were being walked on. The abolition of wire strings would materially aid the disappearance of certain unpleasant noises of this description. I cannot say that the orchestra served the conductor too well on this occasion. The hesitancy in playing the detached chording accompanying recitative must not be attributed to the conductor, whose beat, from where I sat, was unmistakably plain. In the first part of the oratorio many of the brass entries were very ragged, some instruments not entering decidedly until

a quarter beat had passed by. Once, again, there was no observable cause for this apparently careless playing. Occasional discrepancies in pitch on the part of the wind players were both distressing and irritating. Again, it was difficult to see why the conductor should have had to work so hard to obtain ordinary *piano* playing. It is but fair to say that things orchestral improved in part two of the performance.

The choir did not seem to be too well balanced ; but this was the Metropolitan Hall, where weird acoustics prevail. Where I sat the alto line was completely blotted out, and the tenors emerged from obscurity only in higher register passages. The choir excelled in dramatic singing—no climax was missed—but I thought the whole effect of its performance could have been improved by refining the scale of its mezzo-fortes and pianos. As the performance stood, the greatest meed of praise goes to the choir—particularly for its work in part two, where a certain hesitancy in attack disappeared. A special word of praise must be given the quartet in part one—their work was a pleasure to the ear. The soloists were Violet Pearson, Mary Dempster O'Neill, Walter Widdop and Horace Stevens.

The quality of the programmes supplied deserves honorable mention, and, a necessarily short defence of Mendelsohn in the notes from—shall we say—the bright young things, deserves praise for its quality of common-sense.

I have but little space left for the conductor, Mr. Turner Huggard ; if he did not get from choir and orchestra all that he sought, he may rest content in knowing that the small audience thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and that their final ovation was no more than his due.

EAMONN O GALLCHOBHAIR

ART—*continued from page 64*

noticeable among our painters, who are decidedly at a loss, while students, for a solid mass of inherited technique, so that nearly every Irish artist starts from scratch and must face a more toilsome apprenticeship than his contemporaries abroad.

This is not a plea for the importation of a tenth-rate Flemish painter.

Some of the work exhibited prompts the query : "When does the student cease and the artist begin?" To take one example only, the large water-colour, "Market Morning," by Michael Burke, is a most ambitious undertaking, a design full of difficulties surmounted with astonishing skill, a work which definitely puts Mr. Burke out of the student class.

In general, however, the standard was so high that one wonders whether there was not a very critical hanging committee ; a surprisingly large proportion of the pictures were sold to purchasers sufficiently discriminating not to be frightened by the word "student," and the whole exhibition is a tribute not only to the students themselves but to the capacity of their teachers—a relevant issue at the moment.

JOHN DOWLING

THEATRE

GOOD, BAD—AND INDIFFERENT

Since last issue the Abbey has had three productions—O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, George Shiels' *The New Gossoon* (both produced by Arthur Shields) and Maevie O'Callaghan's *Wind from the West* (producer, Hugh Hunt), while the Gate has given only one—*Laburnum Grove*, by J. B. Priestley (producer, Hilton Edwards). All these plays excepting *Juno* were slight in content, and very well served by producers, players and designers. Indeed, it was impossible to find fault with *The New Gossoon*, which was done by the Abbey No. 1 Players to perfection—such photographic, rather superficial, stuff suiting perfectly their style (all observation, little imagination), revealing that this sort of play is their real *metier*.

Similarly, *Wind from the West* was equally well done by the No. 2 Company, and, if anything, with more human feeling and sympathy. *Laburnum Grove* was skilfully done by the Gate, as usual with more sophistication than one expects from the Abbey, but not more slickly, which is rather unusual. All three plays were of the literary, conversation-piece type, relying purely on dialogue, and a modicum of comic business for effect, which was meant to be, and was, surface entertainment purely. The producers concerned made the most of their plays, and it was a real pleasure to watch the deftness and sense of climax displayed in each show. All three, again, used the usual photographic realism in dealing with Irish country and town, and English townspeople, all of them middle class. All three, in fact, were just spoken novels of the usual "best seller" type, and further comment is unnecessary.

As for *Juno*, even the Abbey comedy-complex could not kill the inherent tragedy of O'Casey's lines. This is his best play in every way—in coherency of plot, consistency of feeling, balance of characters, and implicative use of dialogue—and the easiest to produce. It was interesting to note the failure of the No. 1 Company in this play to render adequately the intense depth of feeling required, considering the utter perfection of their rendering of *The New Gossoon*. Genuine efforts were made by Eileen Crowe (*Juno*), Arthur Shields (*Johnny*), P. J. Carolan (*The Paycock*), to render emotion, two of which failed through lack of "grip"—*Juno* being weak at normal times and ranting at the emotional climaxes, whereas sheer strength of mind coupled with restraint typifies this character, while Carolan stressed unduly the mere animal brutality of his part while almost ignoring its craftiness and meanness—points which are more hurtful to *Juno* than his mere masculine cruelty. Special praise is due to May Craig for her short scene as Mrs. Tancred, and it was instructive to note how utterly her lines changed in feeling when repeated by *Juno* in Act 3—all the former depth and suppressed suffering became strident semi-hysteria. Ria Mooney's Mary and Cyril Cusack's Jerry Devine were both fine renderings full of feeling—too full of it at times for they softened several harshnesses which are vital to the play, but this was a pre-

vailing fault. F. J. McCormick's Joxer was efficient, absolutely sure, yet not really alive, being mechanical, and revealed that his Seumas Shields in O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* is simply a rehash of this part, not a separate conception. Finally, the production itself was efficient as to stage effect but not firm and steely enough in attitude, and this play will never be what it is—noble and inspiring—until this attitude, which the gallery, of course, resents, is adopted.

I summarise some points which struck me most about these shows—the fact that the No. 2 Company beats the No. 1 in sympathetic playing and spontaneity if not so inevitably efficient in teamwork; the real versatility of F. J. McCormick as Rabit Hamil; the sheer energy and rather uncontrolled vigour of P. J. Carolan in all his parts, and especially his delightful use of eyes and body as Ned Shay in Act 3 of *The New Gossoon*; Cyril Cusack's increasing ease as junior lead, coupled with mannerisms of voice and arm movement which still remain; Maureen Delaney's sympathetic Ellen Carey; Eileen Crowe's really fine rendering of Sally Hamil; M. J. Dolan's excellent true-to-life Uncle Peter, devoid of the usual sense of tiredness this player gives; Phyllis Ryan's innate acting ability as Biddy Henley, shown by fine teamwork and definite characterisation, even in so tiny a part; the quiet naturalism of *Wind from the West* in dealing with connubial boredom and the awful consequences of learning "what is home without a mother?", its unavailed-of opportunities for contrasting English and Irish outlook on these matters and the fine stage sense of the incident of the mother rushing for the 'bus in Act 2—whether due to authoress or producer a real *pièce-de-théâtre*, all its effect coming purely from stage suggestion, wherein Christine Hayden (the mother), Anne Clery (the maid), and Shelah Richards (the wife), all equally contributed. Arthur Shields' versatility as the doctor in this and as Mad Henley in *The New Gossoon*; Shelah Richards' delightfully tantalising and vague wife; three delightful character-sketches, very well done—W. O'Gorman as the goofy brother (a remarkable piece of work, for the goofiness never became wooden), Frolic Mulhern's amazing perpetration as the new maid from Donegal—what life—what an accent—what a maid!—and A. Meldon's carpetlayer—this player can do more acting with the angle of his back, and the set of an eyebrow than most of the Abbey put together; Moya Devlin's courageous and skilful handling of a difficult problem when called on to read Ria Mooney's part at an hour's notice. (Miss Mooney, I am glad to hear, is now almost recovered from her sudden illness). And the excellence of the stage management (innumerable bell cues and several light-switchings) and a setting delightfully natural and pleasant in colour and arrangement—Miss Moiseiwitsch bringing off one of her usual permutations on the Abbey stock of flats.

Turning to the Gate, we had Hilton Edwards suavely autocratic as the typical suburban tomato-growing father; an excellent wife from Meriel Moore; Diana Vernon as her usual tight-lipped self (type casting again); Sheila May

also as herself, but quite attractive nevertheless (not quite so ambiguous as it sounds) and, above all, an unusual display of virtuosity by Lionel Dymoke as the sponging uncle—really fine this, in every way, from banana peeling to luggage carrying. Liam Gaffney's Inspector Stack was fine, too, and his scene with Edwards in Act 3 was a lovely piece of teamwork. The setting, however, was too sombre and the lighting poor (for once)—Act 1 would have been far more dramatic with central lighting on the table only. Ibsen's *Brand* is awaited with expectancy, unusual treatment being promised.

An interesting production—for the lessons its faults can teach, was the Father Matthew Players in *The House of Lynch*, by F. Jay (producer, J. J. Henry; designer, John O'Gorman). This play interested me because of its possibilities, dealing as it does with that James Lynch, Warden of Galway, who hanged his own son that Justice might be done, and because it might lead others to use our history as material for drama, teeming as it is with such episodes, this being, in fact, the author's own idea in writing it. However, both the situation and the period (c. 1490) gave many opportunities for effect which were not availed of, both play and production being meagre in result—detail not being half filled in. The play has coherent action but no implications, no "loom" of tragedy or universal appeal—though nearly attained at times. One notable feature, however, was the final scene, acted entirely in dumb-show, revealing what real acting ability the players had—Joseph Duffy (Warden Lynch), Henry McDonnell (Jester), T. Duffy (Captain of the Guard), and Peg. Bohan (Lynch's wife), all doing excellent work, facial expression being particularly good. These players, together with Mary Leddy (O'Bannon's mother), and Jack Cruise (O'Maille)—whom it was a relief to hear and watch—were outstanding; Cecil Ford (Lynch's son) was insipid (the part, however, being badly underwritten), his voice rather weak and husky, but gesture and presence good—as his part is a keystone in the plot, he was definitely the weakest link in the chain. All the players indulged in overacting at times: movements and gestures being often comically stagey. One shining example was P. L. McCann (Perkin Warbeck), who was amazing in make-up and general treatment—a blend of Fu Manchu and Uriah Heep resulting in a very nasty person, indeed. He had real stage presence, but no sense of style or restraint, being very much a star travelling in the light of his own glory, and had some excellent moments and many ludicrous ones when eyes, fingers and shoulders had strained themselves into convolutions as sinister as his voice.

I went principally to see local colour, period detail and atmosphere, and got none. Galway, as Warbeck remarked, was, indeed, a village and its denizens, villagers, townspeople and clanfolk not being properly distinguished. The permanent set was weak, not focal enough; it should have been adapted to suit the first street scene, this being killed by a bare traverse well over-lit, and a cheering populace of five persons. The tracery of the windows was good but anachronistic in view of the general style of costume and detail—a point often overlooked by designers. The costumes in general were well cut, but

rather tawdry in colouring, due to undue mixture of earthy colours with pure tones, the simpler costumes being best, notably the Jester's and Warbeck's. At no time was it suggested that Galway was a wealthy, fortified seaport, alert always for attacks from the Irish and holding in its port vessels from Spain, Italy, and the Levant. Yet suggestive detail—a few ship silhouettes, extras in foreign costume, and on guard outside windows, more massive walls and windows, and, above all, more props (vessels, chairs, ornaments, tapestries) would all have suggested the wealth and the stealth that were Galway in its glory.

I have dealt so particularly with this production in the hope that groups tackling such plays will stage them properly, with an eye to detail. The Comhar Dramuiochta (producer and designer, Cyril Cusack), for instance, this week staged a new play, *Buaidh an Ullaigh*, by Séamus O Néill, dealing with the Fianna, calling for similar treatment, and in general getting it, Act 3 being quite good. But the play itself was pitifully poor stuff (no character development, rather clumsy dialogue and narration instead of action), nor had the players any faith in it—their stage sense, after all, was greater than the author's. Liam O'Briain's excellent translation of Pierre Jalabert's *La farce des Bossus—Na Cruiteachain*—was also staged, and was very well done indeed: being tackled with the necessary energy, all the more admirable in view of the smallness of the audience of twenty or so. (It is high time that Gaelic speakers gave more than lip-service to their dramatic movement, if it is to live at all). Everybody in this production deserves high praise, and I liked especially the little concert party and the costume designs—the setting itself could have been more fantastic, but was quite good. It was a pleasant oasis in a month-long desert of mediocrity.

SEAN O MEADHRA

THE LITTLE THEATRES

The Dublin Little Theatre Guild recently gave four members the opportunity of producing one-act plays, and an interesting programme resulted. The best production in attention to detail and pointing of lines was that by Peter Murphy, some of the effect being lost, however, by slow cue-taking. A scene from Georg Kayser's *Gas* was staged by Alex. Digges, and was successful in mass-effect and grouping, lighting and setting being very good—more intelligent phrasing and reaction would have helped some of the speakers, but, in general, the effect of brooding and groping "after the explosion" was achieved. John Lodwick tackled a difficult problem in Sheridan's *St. Patrick's Day*. As this curtain-raiser requires 5 scene-changes, the frequent breaks called for more speed and verve in handling than was attained. The only speaker with an ear for timing and response was Pat Dunne, whose Lauretta was very good; but real praise is due to Tom Ryan for his revelation of character-sense as Justice Credulous, his gestures, however, in common with the rest, being generally awkward and ill-timed. A mime-play to music—*Pierrots at*

Versailles—was produced by P. J. Fitzsimons with much success. Lighting and costumes were lovely, and the whole mood of hushed, idyllic moonlight was well-suggested, but there was practically no point in any gesture (the two *jeune filles* were best at this)—a prevailing fault being lack of *feel* for the movements laid down—there was no crispness, no climactic use of hands (say) to endstop an arm movement. This resulted in vague prettiness rather than beauty, an achievement nevertheless, since the players had never done mime before.

Cork's dramatic enthusiasts should support a new venture there—the Little Theatre Society—who are opening on 18th January next, with Lennox Robinson's *The Far-Off Hills*, and St. John Ervine's *Anthony and Anna*: producer, James Stack; designer, Alec. R. Day. The Society asks for subscribers to assist it in producing "the best plays in the best possible manner." If it achieves this, it will have achieved much indeed, and I shall be glad to hear of its success.

SEAN O MEADHRA

THE DRAMA IN ULSTER

Theatrical events of the Ulster winter have included two Northern Drama League presentations, visits of the Abbey and Longford players, and a Queen's University D.S. performance of an Elizabethan play on Elizabethan lines. The Abbey Theatre clowned their way through O'Casey's tragedies before delighted and large audiences, who only regretted that the one Yeats play presented, *Caitlin Ni Houlihan*, was not so comic as O'Casey's works. Still even in this they found a laugh or two. As a contrast, Lord Longford's company, with *Yahoo*, faced a respectful and small audience, who suspected them of being highbrow and were anxious not to applaud or laugh at the wrong moment. The play was well acted and the final scene really impressive. *The Moon in the Yellow River*, reviewed in a Belfast paper as a skit on the I.R.A., was popular and accepted in that spirit. *Three Cornered Moon*, slick and spasmodically American, reminded us how much better it had been done on the screen. Preceding the main plays, scenes were given from *Twelfth Night*. The *Letter* and *Wooing* incidents were grand, but the *Carousal* was flat, as stage carousals so often are. The Northern Drama League presented Bridie's *Jonah and the Whale* in October and Meredith's version of Euripides' *Andromache* in November. *Jonah's* absurd story is startlingly like that of many of our northern clerical prophets and as a parable the play went down big. In staging and casting it was as good as any of the fine productions the League have given. In *Andromache*, produced by the translator, Grace Hamilton was notably good, and as the unfortunate widow spoke the difficult opening monologue and chant with distinction. The chorus were excellent as individuals but lacked unison. Some of the value of Professor Meredith's sonorous script was lost by the poor diction of members of the cast.

WILLIAM CARTER

FILMS

IRISH CINEMA AND THE CINEMAS

CRITICISM has specific functions to fulfil. It aims at assessment of standards (purpose and achievement) for the special subject within the ken of the critic. It advances from a survey of that subject to the borders of Art considered as a special job and is conscious of further horizons opening up the fundamental purpose of life—being, doing and making.

Criticism cannot ignore realities or sterility will ensue. On the other hand, it must not bow to existing realities in blind acceptance of current codes, but must lead the way to those greater potentialities inherent in its subject.

Now sympathise with a film critic who is cut off from his readers by a barrier impervious to a wave of mutual understanding. The programmes shown in the cinemas of Ireland represent the cheapest and most inferior products of modern film production, generally devoid of any cultural value or spiritual ideas. And to these rapidly increasing cinemas flock by the thousand Irish filmgoers, assimilating sentimental twaddle and mush, based on perverted human values. A little example being of more value than much theory, it is necessary to be able to refer to such and such a film as a criterion, but, unfortunately, my readers will not have seen such and such a film, so where am I. The curious fluid quality of film cannot be recreated in prose. As well try to describe a symphony by Beethoven or a sculpture by Rodin.

And when one feels that the cinema should bear some relation to the cultural aspirations of the people who make its commercial development possible, the subject is most certainly carried into the realms of the discussion of the modern outlook and the position of man in the modern chaos of money, production, and distribution.

This question of the Cinemas has aroused some attention at last, and the dangers of a foreign invasion by vendors of film entertainment are being discussed in their wider implications. "Cu Uladh," in a letter to the press, in which he points out the damage done to our language and traditional culture, makes the following statement :—

"Now this anti-national force is not inherent in the cinema. One can conceive it as a great national and cultural force. What is the position in this respect in France, in Germany, in Italy, in Russia? Does anyone imagine that in these countries the picture house would be tolerated in carrying forward a deliberate propaganda against the national ideals of those countries or in favour of foreign and adverse ideals? Are the things of the mind less important than things of the body? Let the licensing of fresh picture houses be conditioned on the exhibition of a proportion of pictures made in Ireland, with Irish as the language, or indicated, as a translation. Let existing picture houses gradually be brought under similar regulations; and as the language spreads let the regulations be tightened until we get genuinely Irish and National pictures. I do not mean that pictures of foreign life throughout the

world should be excluded, but they should come to us through our own language and in a national setting."

And Dr. Devane, in the last issue of this magazine, wrote:—"The Irish cinema is already born. Let Government help it by decreeing that half an hour of every programme should be made in Ireland even though it be made by one man with a camera taking shots of seagulls off Loop Head. Later, one hour can be made compulsory."

Now this seems to me to be excellent in intention, but in practice it seems very like putting the cart before the horse. Film showing is distinct from film making, and film exhibitors are not always competent to undertake or even to judge the latter. What, then, would the position be if exhibitors were under compulsion to show something which doesn't exist. It seems to me that the correct method of fostering Irish cinema would be to encourage some responsible Irish unit conscious of the filmic needs and potentialities of this country, in sympathy with national aspirations and the given realities of our spiritual background, and capable of responsible filmic craftsmanship. To indiscriminately foster a foreign invasion of cinema exploiters by a loose quota system would result in an increase of Irish films certainly, but almost equally certain would be the shoddy quality of these quota pictures. The first essential of Irish film production is the realization of the limitations of the home market, and if the work is to be of any value ultimately, it is for our own people the films must be made. There is undoubtedly the possibility of developing foreign markets, but schemes on a large scale depending on this are doomed to disappointment.

Unfortunately in matters of this kind people look to the Government to take the initiative, as if it were the perpetual function of government to spoon-feed the citizens of the State. A scheme such as this one of film production should not owe its inception to the State because that would be to withdraw the element of competitive endeavour, and, furthermore, to make it subservient to the red tape of well-meaning officials ignorant of the problems involved.

The subject of Irish film production should claim the interest of all public spirited people, being as it is a vital influence nowadays in the life of a nation. Patrons of art and leaders of culture should feel it their duty to encourage efforts along the right lines, and, quite apart from the philanthropic aspect, Irish film production is a definite commercial proposition if only the limitations are borne in mind.

Hitherto plans for Irish films have consisted in the resurrection of fantastic visions of an Irish Hollywood, and films have been confined to the subjects of Black and Tans, stage Irishmen, and sentimental scenics, but none of which could be calculated to add to our prestige abroad. Nothing of an inner spirit was adequately expressed.

During the past month I have been discussing the complete programme of

a young and enthusiastic organisation which combines the technical and artistic experience of the best studios of Europe with this desire to bring worth-while Irish film production into the realms of concrete achievement. I shall watch with interest the progress of this first coherent attempt in its endeavour to arouse the necessary interest to bring a virile, active, and artistic Irish Cinema into being.

LIAM O LAOGHAIRE

FOREIGN COMMENTARY—*continued from page 92.*

the South against the legally constituted Government of the North. They even rigged out in an English harbour a warship to aid the Southern States. For this breach of international law they were condemned by the Court of Arbitration in 1871 to pay the United States fifteen and a half million dollars compensation. But, then, the Northern States won the war. Then, as now, only the powerful could appeal for justice and see that they got it. There is no international body to-day with the courage to condemn Germany or Italy to pay compensation to the Spanish Government; of course, international law has been refined and brought up-to-date since those evil days.

OWEN SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

(Owing to pressure on space in our December issue, we were unable to give adequate notice to this new feature. In future we propose to devote a limited space to the discussion of views that have appeared in our pages. It is hoped that readers will avail themselves of this to the full.)

Mr. John O'Gorman (B.Arch., M.R.I.A.I.), 11 Leinster Street, Sth., Dublin writes (17-xii-1936) : I have read with considerable interest and some occasional uneasiness an article on "Nationality and Culture" by Dr. James Devane. My first cause for uneasiness was his reference to what he describes as "that universal blight which has settled on Europe's architecture, poetry, music and art." He uses the word *art* in its narrow and popular sense as meaning painting and sculpture only, but while I believe that he is unjustified in his wholesale condemnation of contemporary European painting and sculpture, it is in his reference to architecture that he is most at fault. Is Dr. Devane really so out of sympathy with contemporary European architecture that he could make a statement so obviously opposed to the facts?

Any suggestion for the improvement of Irish culture is worthy of careful consideration, but some of Dr. Devane's proposals seem to suggest that he can have had but little intimate experience of the arts concerned. On the general principle that painters and sculptors should toe the line with other workmen and make themselves more generally useful in connection with building work I am in complete agreement with him, but suggestions, such as that put forward, that 30 or 40 "artists" should be commissioned to "embellish" our national buildings, "working within the native canon" appear to me to be based upon several fundamental misconceptions. Such a misconception seems to be embodied in his proposal for the improvement of Irish architecture. I must therefore express the hope that Dr. Devane will enlarge upon his references to painting, sculpture and architecture in order that my fears might yet be proved unfounded.

BOOK SECTION

A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

IN our reviews this month, we include Robert Farren's "Thronging Feet." Mr. Farren is explicitly a Catholic poet. In Ireland, perhaps alone of countries in Western Europe, men of the last thirty years have been Catholics and poets without being Catholic poets. Deductions from this can be only tentative; but it would seem that Catholicism in Ireland, sheltered in its league with power, pre-Treaty and post-Treaty, has been less an inspiration, less in herself compelled into the crying forth of the spiritual and inward wealth. There has been no religious urge in Anglo-Irish literature, philosophy, nor sociology, comparable to that which in England drew Belloc and Chesterton, in France, Claudel, Peguy and Jacques Maritain, under its banner. It would seem that Catholicism in Ireland has never felt sufficiently the need of apologetics to welcome the Catholic layman to that post. There is reason to believe that a young Claudel in Ireland would be rewarded for his first flight with a knock on the head, and would thenceforth range himself with the subversive intellectuals, said to be more dangerous than the communists.

Which leads on to another question. Where stand the intellectuals, intelligentsia, dilligenti (terms of contempt in the ordinary press and platform connotation) in relation to our life? Now these, by the very names by which they are decried, are the people who think, who are concerned with one of **two** things, or both: beauty, truth (which statement, in our utilitarian civilisation sounds more than a little naive). Needless to say, not all of them are honest; as not all publicans, grocers, lawyers, politicians are honest. But however desirable it may be from certain points of view they cannot very well be eliminated; except perhaps at a time when bloodshed is common enough to be undertaken without effort, as when Bolshevik rid their utilitarian state of Menshevik. And the parallel is not so far-fetched. There, too, it was the irritation of a faction who believed they had reached the final and static righteousness with those who still believed that the complete righteousness is not a static state at all, but a continuous discovery, dynamic. Conservative or revolutionary, are not so much opposite as complimentary functions in the national growth; the first, which includes guardians of public morals and instruction, act with an assumption of final certainty, necessary if the state machine, as distinct from the nation, is to work at all; the second are the explorers, mappers out of the conservative position of to-morrow. State, by its very name its static; Nation is organic.

It often happens, and is happening in Ireland to-day that one of these things, the revolutionary, is thwarted; the people being denied approach to its findings; its authors suppressed by force and influence. The result is a delayed development, followed by eruption, and an exaggerated swing to the left! The old juxtaposition of irresistible force and immoveable object. For

growth is the irresistible force, though you may ban individual authors and jail individual rebels with temporary impunity.

The Churchman claims that the people have already an authoritative moral teacher and do not need the services of this adventurer, novelist, poet, or critic. But I would point out that there is besides a no-man's-land uncharted by the moral law ; marked only by signposts carrying pious aspirations. For instance : a weighty mass of early Church teaching condemns usury ; to-day a sentimental lip-service might be won for a case against it ; while our State to-day, in which the Church bears a willing part, is based radically on a complicated system of usury.

Of late the novelist in Ireland has suffered much at the hands of authority. Scarcely one of our novelists but has been decreed unsuitable reading for the Irish public. The censor-critic asks with indignation why the novelist does not preoccupy himself honest, clean living people, instead of with the monsters, shady, mean, erotic characters. He might as well ask why medicine does not restrict its practice to the clean and healthy parts of the body. For at least one legitimate function of literature is the criticism of life.

Men like Dr. Devane, remembering a time when literature in Ireland played cultural commissariat to the army of freedom, wonder why it does not form in itself now an unofficial ministry of propaganda to glorify our present state. The answer is obvious ; it does not think the present state calls for glorification. It does not waste time in the creation of ideal human type or paper utopia ; knowing already in desperation that idealistic teaching, created under gunfire and paid for in blood, in Ireland of the last thirty years, is yet without fulfilment, what is worse, has been placarded on hoardings and left there, the nation having no stomach for digesting it.

The fact is that this country is deafened with people protesting ideals, identical ideals ornamenting rival band waggons. Get an ideal lettered on your banner and forget about it. Nor is there any outcry when political windbags, rural councillors and other axegrinders advance private, party and venal interests under the names of things sacred. That is not to say that religion should be kept apart from life ; but this rather, that men should have some conscience in their public missions before they claim Divine sanction for them.

EDWARD SHEEHY

THE IRISH SHELF

CINNLAÉ AMHLAOIBH UÍ SHÚILEABHAIN. Edited by Rev. Michael McGrath.
Irish Texts Society. One Guinea.

Volume XXX of the Irish Text Society's Publications is devoted to that part of Amhlaoibh O Súileabhain's Diary which covers the period from January, 1827, to August, 1828. The whole work will be completed in four volumes, for the writer kept his narration going until 1835.

O Súileabhain's father kept a hedge school in Cill Airne, and, happening on a worse period in what were always bad times, he moved with his family to Callan, in the County of Kilkenny some six months after the fall of the Bastille

in Paris. Amhlaoibh, in turn, became a teacher, and supplemented the *res angustae* of scholarship by keeping a shop in the town of Callan. His lyceum was ruined by the establishment of the National Schools in 1830. From that date, till his death in 1837, he carried on business as a linen-draper and stationer, and was active, and evidently highly esteemed, in the life of the little town to which he had been brought at the age of ten.

This is not the place for a critical excursus, and, in any case, the real interest of this volume is, at no point, a matter of lexicography. It holds the reader's attention by its fascinating inconsequence, its diversity of observation, and its felicitous sense of the colour and fragrance of life in that Ireland of 1830. O Súilleabhain had his ear to the ground. Nothing escaped him. He tells of the construction of the harbour at Dun Laoghaire, and of the Tunnel under the Thames; he has running comments on the Russo-Turkish War, the war for the liberation of Greece, and the July Revolution in France. At home he has much to say about the Cogadh na nDeachmhan—the Tithe War, the drought of 1826, and the withering poverty of our people. Hunger was then compelling unhappy men to break stones for a new road at threepence a day.

But besides his interest in current events and his reaction to social disorders, O Súilleabhain was sensitive to every manifestation of nature. With his delight in birds and botany, he was the Seton Gordon of his time. Everything stirred him—the fragrance of the autumn stubble, soft lapping seas, April and April's daffodils, the young spring days, the lark's song on the wind, the doleful cry of the curlew—he missed nothing. At page 272 he bursts into a rime on the fair of Ballingarry. The translator has given an excellent line-for-line prose rendering. The reviewer found it reminiscent of something or other, and eventually puzzled out that Father McGrath had—unwittingly perhaps—made an outstanding contribution to the corpus of what is known as “Modern Poetry.” This piece of observation is “exclusive” to IRELAND TO-DAY.

The *Cinnlae* has a spiritual significance for the Irish people. It is the work of one who deliberately put aside the notion of writing in English. In his time Irish was strong and virile, and his book is a self-sufficing refutation of those omniscient people who will assert that Irish is restricted in its vocabulary and inadequate to the needs of the artist desirous of emotional expression. O Súilleabhain was no stylist in his jottings. They were never polished for publication. But his work is filled with passages of great literary merit which will be an abiding joy to readers of Irish. And yet, we are so mope-eyed in our outlook on our own literature, that in all probability more people of our generation in Ireland will have read Queen Victoria's diary of her tour in the Hebrides than the *Cinnlae* of O Súilleabhain.

The editor and translator has done his work with an affectionate regard for the Callan schoolmaster. He has written a long and sympathetic introduction to the book, and his work is marked, at all points, with that scholarship which is characteristic of *an t-Athair Micheal MagCraith*.

SÉAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

THE ISLANDS OF IRELAND. Thomas H. Mason. (*Batsford*, 10s. 6d.).

From the pictures with which his book is profusely illustrated, Mr. Mason certainly takes first rank as a photographer. The text, however, leaves much to be desired. As we read, the impression grows that we are dealing with the diary of the author written whilst visiting the various islands of Ireland over a period of many years, supplemented, for publication purposes, by historical sketches, tales told him by the Islanders, and bird life of the islands. All the inhabited and many uninhabited islands from Tory Island to the Saltees

are dealt with in detail. The author's view of life is expressed in the following paragraph :—" To my thinking one of the most disturbing features of modern life is the constant whirl of speed, excitement and competition in which so many people live, move and have their being, and the disinclination or inability of the younger generation to occupy their spare time in the simpler, more beautiful, more lasting pleasures which can be obtained by the observation of the world of nature." The book certainly achieves its object in giving an idea of the islands of Ireland, which are too little known. The inhabitants of many islands depend largely nowadays on visitors as a means of livelihood. The actual photographs in this book should be a great attraction to anyone who might be interested in an unusual holiday close to nature, and to life as it is lived far from modern civilisation.

R. O. R.

OTHER PLACES

AMERICAN LITERATURE

THE FLOWERING OF NEW ENGLAND. By Van Wyck Brooks. (*Dent*, 15s.).

This is the first volume, by the well-known American critic, of a literary history of the United States, covering New England from 1815 to 1865.

The author's aim is to interpret it through its writers, thinkers, speakers, educators; he has painted a vivid picture, lit up with an astonishing wealth of detail, incorporating in his text phrases from the writings of the time, " to give an effect of immediacy."

Boston, " the Christian Sparta "—it would fain also claim the title of Athens—stands as the hub of the solar system, in some aspects another Edinburgh, as New England is another Scotland, but with a difference, as gradually the leading strings of the Old World are cast away. Gone the days when no one dared praise an American poet till the Edinburgh Review did. It is an era " rammed with life," a Storm and Stress time as apprenticeship is followed by Wander-years till at last the Master-craftsman emerges. At first influences, curiously blent of Carlyle, Goethe, Scott, Byron, Maria Edgeworth, Georges Sand, then, as New England realizes itself, the new Americanism pours in, echoing in its emancipation Biglow's phrase :

" Why, I'd give more for one live bobolink

Than a square mile o' larks in printer's ink ! "

Here are set out New England's many strains, " the warm and chivalrous Tory " crossed with the bleak and rugged Calvinist rebelliousness, making for " impossible loyalties " and new quixotisms, possessed, above all (a characteristic that persists to this day) with a profound belief in itself, convinced that single-handed, it could lick creation . . . all these religious and social cross-currents are fascinatingly mirrored in this book. Blossoming time is always more thrilling than harvest. Theological problems were cast as " the measles and mumps " of childhood, succeeded by a passion for learning, an eagerness in the pursuit of knowledge, so that men became " learned in roses," a learned blacksmith hammered out intellectual problems as he laboured at his forge, and Concord became famous for producing the entire output of teachers that supplied the whole United States. The tale went that of old the Indians had spared the town of Concord, when laying low the neighbouring settlements, their Chief declaring : " If we go there we shall never prosper. The Great Spirit loves that place." Concord, the home of Emerson, the haunt of many inspired by him, was to justify that prophecy.

Harvard College in the heart of Cambridge, an outpost of Boston—to which

seven generations before every New England household had given twelvapence or its equivalent, either a peck of corn or its value in "unadulterated wampum peag"—plays its part in this story, as do the great periodicals, the "North American Review," the "Dial," founded by Alcott, the "Atlantic Monthly" by Holmes, of the Autocrat at the Breakfast Table fame. Other features described are the experiment at community life at Brook Farm, Thoreau's hermitage at Walden, Hawthorne's strange mode of life in his Old Manse at Salem, the Alcott family and their struggle to combine plain living and high thinking. Historians like Prescott and Motley, poets like Longfellow and Lowell, Emerson, the Sage of Concord, are appraised; the anti-Slavery writers, Garrison, Whittier, Rogers, Dana, Philips are included. The women of the period, Margaret Fuller, the Peabody Sisters, Harriet Beecher Stowe are particularly remarkable—Uncle Tom's Cabin, a world event, the cause, as Lincoln said later of the Civil War, a work which appeared in 37 languages, the Bible alone appearing in so many versions, "great enough to be bad," as the authors sums up. Mr. Brooks has achieved his purpose, producing a notable contribution to literary history in a new manner, making the past relive in his racy and well documented pages. One looks forward to his second volume, which will bring the story to the Great War.

H. S. S.

SPANISH FRONT. By Carlos Prieto. (*Nelson*, 2s. 6d.).

Unquestionably this book, complete with map, is the most valuable summary yet offered to the man-in-the-street. It lacks, perhaps, the dispassionate analysis of Professor Peers, but the book palpitates. The case for Spain and its Government is set forth in impassioned, vibrant tones, yet facts and figures are always invoked where needed. Usually when reviewing a book of this type, I read with pen and paper beside me, so that historical mistatements, for instance, might be paginated as the book evolves. But this was too gripping for mere academic cavilling, and I was swept, from its masterly introduction of the fusion of the existing Spanish race out of a very mixed melting-pot, on to the poignant pages of despoiled Madrid. It is regrettable that the book should be marred by bitter references to "the hated Jesuits" and the Catholic Church.

L. J. ROSS

OTHER TIMES

CHARACTERS OF THE REFORMATION. By Hilaire Belloc. (*Sheed and Ward*, 10s. 6d.).

Mr. Belloc's writings upon European history have enjoyed a great popularity. In recent years he has devoted much attention to the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century and its subsequent effects. The present volume is in the nature of a popular summary of the views he has put forward in the previous works. It is planned as a series of character sketches of the conspicuous figures in that two-century drama, to which is prefixed an introduction stating concisely what he regards as the "nature of the Reformation."

Briefly it is this: The beginnings of the Reformation were anarchical. Resisted by the organised central authorities of Christendom it would have been bound to fail. But the capture of England by the Revolutionary side turned the scales. It prevented the Counter-Reformation from achieving an unqualified success. A succession of incidents—the first of which was the infatuation of Henry VIII for Anne Boleyn—brought about the Reformation in England. To understand this properly a study of the personalities of the movement is essential. Even if we do not altogether agree with Mr. Belloc we must admire the vividness of his portraits and the simplicity of his narrative.

A few words in the opening chapter hint at a historical truth which Mr. Belloc has discussed elsewhere. The conquest of Ireland by Cromwell ruined the Irish Catholics economically. It brought about the reprehensible system of landlordism which evicted a famished tenantry in black '47 and sent it to the confines of the earth. Cromwell had hoped to extirpate Catholicism in Ireland, but the descendants of those he enslaved spread the Faith in the New World and the Southern Hemisphere in the Nineteenth Century.

The later biographies will prove of particular interest. They deal with subjects such as Richelieu, Louis XIV, Descartes and Pascal. The last two are included to explain the effects of the rationalistic and Jansenistic movements on the history of the Catholic Church in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The work has been tastefully produced but we agree with the author that the illustrations added by the publishers are not consonant with the text.

R. DUDLEY EDWARDS

WAR—THE LAST AND THE NEXT

THE FIVE YEARS, 1914-1918. By John Brophy. (*Barker*, 15s. 0d.).

MODERN WAR AND DEFENCE RECONSTRUCTION. By Capt. J. R. Kennedy. (*Hutchinson*, 12s. 6d.).

Mr. Brophy has rendered a real service to writers who do not wish to be burdened with over-detail and to the very large number of men in the street who constitute the participants and non-participants of the last great war. The book is a conspectus of the war, cramming the full history into 105 pages, and then dealing successively with the war in the air, the social and other effects of the war as felt by the home population, the contribution from the Dominions and the finances of the war. Then follow in this valuable compilation biographies of prominent people, a glossary of common technical terms, a chronological summary of events, a bibliography and nearly one hundred pages of Essential Statistics.

The permanent value of the work as a source of reference is enhanced by the many maps included.

For the instructed layman interested in war, the Empire, Europe or the survival of civilisation, Captain Kennedy's book is of intense interest. *Der Tag* looms ahead as surely as ever before and only ostriches could fail to heed the warning note sounded—at least, English ostriches, for it is one of the advantages of our retarded development that if we have little strength for offence, we have by one of nature's compensatory arrangements, little need for defence.

Captain Kennedy as a critic of England's dilatoriness in her own defence reconstruction does not greatly concern us, but in the application of the general principles of war to modern conditions and the evaluation of the shifting importance of the various arms he gives us a most timely appraisal of the problems of defence and imperial integration.

L. J. R.

POETRY

THE OXFORD BOOK OF MODERN VERSE, 1892-1935. Chosen by W. B. Yeats. (*Oxford, at the Clarendon Press*, 8s. 6d.).

Some English critics dislike the new *Book* for the pessimism of the poets, but Mr. Yeats had to take them as he found them. Others attack his choices, particularly of the Moderns. To the reviewer it seems not only to be satisfactory in the earlier and easier half, but to give a better picture than any other of

strictly Modern verse. No survey of these poets can be made here ; they are too many, and their achievement is too incomplete. But it may be said in passing that Mr. W. J. Turner comes out particularly well, the Sitwells, and a poet not before well known, Miss Wellesly. Auden and Day Lewis and Empson are weakly represented and do not make the impression they ought.

Readers who have not yet found the key to the Moderns might turn to the easiest of them, Mr. MacNeice, the only Irish Modern. This is from a dialogue on the coming ruin of England :

And over-elaboration will nothing now avail,
The street is up again, gas, electricity or drains,
Ever-changing conveniences, nothing comfortable remains
Un-improved, as flagging Rome improved villa and sewer
(A sound-proof library and a stable temperature).
Our street is up, red lights sullenly mark
The long trench of pipes, iron guts in the dark,
And not till the Goths again come swarming down the hill
Will cease the clangour of the electric drill.
But yet there is beauty narcotic and deciduous
In this vast organism grown out of us :
On all the traffic islands stand white globes like moons,
The city's haze is clouded amber that purrs and croons,
And tilting by the noble curve bus after tall bus comes
With an osculation of yellow light, with a glory like
chrysanthemums.

It exemplifies the Modern's resolve to be, though passively and bitterly, in the world, unlike their predecessors who piped in Arcadia ; the use of the modern world's language, in its full compass ; the breaking of outworn rhythms into new ones, rough but alive.

The treatment of the Irish poets will surprise. Mr. Gogarty has seventeen poems, more than by even-handed justice he ought ; but the excess has had the effect of introducing this bold and gay muse to the English reader, and in his gratitude it is justified. Lady Gregory has five, translations. Mr. Yeats, too modestly, gives himself eleven. Synge has twelve ; Mr. Stephens eight ; Mr. Colum three, which is too few. Half-a-dozen others are briefly represented.

Of the younger men, Mr. O'Connor appears with no less than seven translations. Mr. Higgins has four poems, not perhaps of his best. One would have liked that sweaty, rolling-gaited poem, *Boyne Walk*, which carries its crudenesses more poetically than some of those given.

There are strange omissions. Seumas O'Sullivan has done some perfect lyrics, and made interesting technical experiments. Ledwidge was a simple and ignorant man, but a poet. To read his book is to fall in the power of a dream, the enchantment of the Boyne country in May ; and there are in it pieces well wrought enough to stand in isolation. Perhaps no one else in Ireland, competent to judge of poetry, would have condemned Mr. Clarke. Mr. Yeats has found room for Oriental pieces done into tasteless English, but none for such jewels of form as *South-West Wind* or the title-poem in *Pilgrimage*.

J. J. HOGAN

FORTY IRISH POETS ?

GOOD-BYE, TWILIGHT. Songs of the Struggle in Ireland. Compiled by Leslie Daiken. Woodcuts by Harry Kernoff. (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 2s. 6d.).

While in England poetry has made its adieu to Tennysonianism and entered into the business of firmly *possessing* modern life, in Ireland, if this

book be a representative collection, the poets are still making their angry and rhetorical farewells. They are slamming the door, and shoving in their heads again, and saying some more rude remarks, and then slamming it again and again, and indicating once again what fine things the new world will produce—and we wish to Heavens they would go away and do their job in peace and quietness.

Nymphes tendre et vermeille, o jeune poesie !

Quel bois est aujourd'hui ta retraite choisie ?

The devil a retraite choisie ! Not if this is to be taken as typical :—

Sometimes it seems true : Ireland is hooey, is a lie ;

Ireland is a lie and a sow of lies,

A trouble and a folly of fools.

Seeing that in the north the tramlines go out to Cave Hill,

And in the south the tramlines go out to Sunday's Well.

Abstractions, clichés, conventions, as old as Bloomsbury, linger in that kind of thing as much as in lines like :

Foul Poverty stalks along with gloomy frown,

or (as old as Davis) in :

And I see always

The minions of the Saxon Foe,

or, Joseph MacNally's song, *Awaiting the Dawn*, with its "camp-fires," "glowing fires of the Saxon," "moon shining down on our guns," "Dear Old Ireland," and so forth, all of which is as unrealistic as one might expect from a capitalist washing his hands in old dead symbols;

or,

Kerry mothers . . . peer across half-doors in the dusk,

which is sheer Anglo-Irish.

Where there is simplicity one can, here and there, be moved—and presumably poetry does still appeal to emotions ? There is a suppressed emotion in Kiernan's song for *Sean Riordan Worker* ; there is sound restraint in Charlie Donnelly's, *The Flowering Bars* ; Cecil Salkeld is much too self-conscious. The only poet in the whole book is Patrick Kavanagh, and he has realised that poetry concerns itself with itself, and cannot be made into a harlot for propaganda. But the most disappointing thing about the whole collection is the "Folk Song" section. It must discourage anybody interested in the rise of the people, for it chockfull of rhetoric and utterly without realism. What, for instance, is the use in singing about bold raparees, spears, bivouacs, and so on, in 1936 ? These people are not folk—they are just middle-class. We observe that there is not a single verse translated from the Irish. Up Russia !

S. O'F.

TWENTY-FIVE POEMS. By Dylan Thomas. (*Dent*, 2s. 6d.)

THRONGING FEET. By Robert Farren. (*Sheed and Ward*, 3s. 6d.).

In his *Twenty-Five Poems*, Mr. Dylan Thomas shows a fine mastery of words : one can hardly say that he employs words or that he depends on them ; words are not the servants of his thought. Some other force within him plays a high game with them ; we are perpetually startled by strange couplings : 'brassy orator,' the 'colic season,' 'symbolised harbour,' 'cadaverous gravels'—the combination invariably happy, for it is no game of chance.

Here is a sample of his music :

Foster the light nor veil the manshaped moon,

Nor weather winds that blow not down the bone,

But strip the twelve-winded marrow from his circle ;

Master the night nor serve the snowman's brain
 That shapes each bushy item of the air
 Into a polestar pointed on an icicle.

If he is often extremely obscure, it is not for the poets' usual reason that thought is too subtle for an imperfect technique ; but merely because of this acting towards words with an easy air of irresponsibility. One thinks he is not concerned with thought at all—and then he will express something new and profound that shows the quality of his mind.

The poetry is everywhere authentic, whether :

They see the squirrel stumble
 The haring snail go giddily round the flower,
 A quarrel of weathers and trees in the windy spiral.

or :

They suffer the undead water where the turtle nibbles,
 Come unto sea-struck towers, at the fibre scaling,
 The flight of the carnal skull
 And the cell-stepped thimble ;
 Suffer, my topsy-turvie, that a double angel
 Sprout from the stony lockers like a tree on Aran.

There is a strange poem about Eden :

And God walked there who was a fiddling warden
 And played down pardon from the heavens' hill.

Mr. Dylan Thomas is very young, and many look to him to do great things.

There is no obscurity about Mr. Farren. "Thronging Feet" strikes the reviewer as being miraculously uneven : the first section although for the most part dealing with the highest of all themes—the love of God, the mysteries of faith, man's littleness before eternity—is inadequate. Mystical passion is essential to religious verse. Good religious poetry is rare. The mere statement of pious belief does not in itself constitute poetry. The believer must be transfigured by the passion of his faith—he must be humble as a little child, he must catch his breath and stammer when writing of divine matters.

"I shall be so ashamed when I meet God," is undignified : perhaps because true awe cannot be expressed so directly and unimportantly.

Coming, however, to "Chesterton," the reader begins to enjoy himself :

Claudel in France with unresenting eye
 salutes elected England passing by
 to hail Aquinas first : he, too, will die.

"Do cuireadh bréag ar an mbás" is a really fine poem :

They have lied about Death.
 Is there bitterer venom in his fang
 or in the raking glances of women ?

Let Death be the asp at the queen's breast,
 was not love the leech at her heart ?

I bequeath scorn to love ; I ask alms of Death.

That should find its way into anthologies. And the man who has written it should avoid the cheapness of sentiment that lifts a perky head from time to time.

But I who, you say, laugh so well,
 why can't I make a song that laughs ?

The reviewer also would ask this question.

Mr. Farren should be very strict in avoiding archaisms, such as "whelming," "olden."

The inspiration of "Thronging Feet," is Gaelic. There is a great deal to admire in the last section of the book: Irish Pieces.

In conclusion, to turn back to page 14, Gaelic Prayer is pure poetry:

That sprinkle, Son of Mary,
dry not from our spirits
till they dart to glory
out of their clay bodies.

Professor Daniel Corkery's illuminating preface is, of course, an added attraction to "Thronging Feet."

BLANAID SALKELD

FICTION

STRESS. By Olga Fielden. (*Cape*, 7s. 6d.).

Those who enjoyed, and rightly enjoyed, Miss Fielden's *Island Story*, will find her of firmer touch and a like humanity in her second novel. She is an Ulster-woman, and her novels are placed in Ulster, and the firm, rocky character of the Ulster folk may be found a pleasant change from the soft, tortuous feckless, impulsive, untidy South. The description of the McGorman farm, with its retainers, labourers, and family figures, reads like a feudal castle. The very nature of the food eaten so heartily and silently in this rough-stone dwellinghouse suggests the solidity of the life; and when the drama gets going there is likewise a weight of movement that impresses one with a sense of gruff strength. Miss Fielden uses her contrasts well. The countryside, contrasting natures, such as that of Mat Jack as against Alex. and Thady McGorman, keep a balance of life and a sense of proportion, and there is dry, invigorating humour, action and excitement, and the sweetness of the character of Sally to match the indomitable life of the land that goes on quietly and heavily behind all. It is a book any writer might be proud to have written.

S. O'F.

SAND CASTLE. By Janet Beith. (*Hodder and Stoughton*. 8s. 6d.).

Miss Janet Beith won the Hodder and Stoughton Prize Novel Competition with her *No Second Spring*, and she appeals to the same large public with this novel of the rise and vicissitudes of two Scottish lads, whose career runs from 1889 to 1934. The formula is not original, and might be called the Still-it-goes-on recipe. The family chronicle, interwoven with topical events, such as the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, or the Coronation of Edward the VII, the rise of industry, war, depression, and so on, is a kind of unrolling map which has a certain unfailing appeal, rather like the old Poole's Miorama. Character gives life to history and history gives dignity to character—or so it is supposed. Though it is a long while since Paul Bourget pointed out, *à propos de Balzac* that it is very difficult in the novel to put real and imaginary events on the same plane—the mosaic is dangerous to the illusion of reality. David, Alan, and Anis, the trio of this novel tend to be dwarfed by events which are merely a background; but the whole is a warm-hearted and kindly story which the family may read in complete security, and it will, doubtless, label Miss Beith as a sound writer in a sound tradition.

S. O'F.

SALAVIN. By Georges Duhamel. (London: *Dent*, 8s. 6d.).

Georges Duhamel (1884–), Member of the French Academy. Editor of the "Mercure de France." Founder, in 1906, of the Abbaye. Doctor of

Medicine. Moralist, essayist, poet, playwright, novelist. Exerts much influence, mainly political and moral, in France and elsewhere.

This English translation collects into one volume four novels in which are related Salavin's thoughts and efforts in his attempt to realize an ideal of conduct. I have not had the opportunity of reading the originals. However, this translation must be good, because the story reads easily, without any loss of French atmosphere.

* * *

There can be no doubt that the business of most modern novelists is the creation of monsters.

Novels about man, fascist, marxist, socialist or imperialist, have no value beyond that of the socio-political theory they are written to illustrate. Propaganda novels are dull because they are attempts to imagine a new human nature, something incapable of existence, and because they are usually stuffed with rhetoric. The propaganda novelist is entirely concerned with the creation of monsters.

But there is a subtler kind of novel, which persuades through a skilfully elaborated quality of *sincerity*. As one would suspect, such sincerity derives, from one or other of the several forms of naturalism. Such novels, most often proceed to a conclusion of despair, the hero being conceived to accept calmly the fact of his being just what he is, a victim of the hazard of circumstances and of the pèrils of his own imagination, without hope of salvation. This kind of monster is deadly.

Let us remember that there are suffering and despairing men all over the world. Let us remember that they are the charge of our charity. But let us not be lead, by a touching work of art, into accepting, even for a moment, sentimental judgments about human destiny.

Salavin is a monster wearing the appearance of all the poor weak men that ever were. His story begins with the losing of his employment because he yielded to an irrational impulse to touch his employer's ear; after which he starts his long meditation on the meaning of life and his repeated attempts to become perfect. M. Duhamel guides Salavin through the failure of every noble effort to a death of suffering, adding an epitaph; which concludes: ". . . . I am leaving you, brother, at the hour when, pushing through and beyond my dreams, I accept with calm despair the fact of being only what I am."

The story is, need I say it, heart-rending. Much good observation has gone into the making of Salavin. A lot of art also. The last book, for instance, is furiously reminiscent of the climax of the Rimbaud legend.

It is the presumption of the modern novelist, to make of the secret of the heart a material for art. The method of interior conversation used frequently in this story is, of course, the stock method of this kind of art. A soul is delivered up to us, for inspection from the very inside. Such insolence!

If this soul is not the author's, I do not know whose it is, whose it could be. There is only one merit in such works. They tell us that one man, at least, is not happy, does not understand why he was born. The only possible value of that knowledge is that it may move our charity.

BRIAN COFFEY

ENVY. By Yuri Olyesha. (Hogarth Press, 7s. 6d.).

This novel first appeared in Russia in 1927, and apparently amused everyone from Comrade Stalin to the soldiers on the Mongolian frontier. True, the writer took certain liberties, but the sternest Marxist does not frown upon

a little harmless laughter. (And laughter is permissible to the most earnest Materialist, being simply a matter of the glands).

But though Olyesha's cheek had been condoned, the discovery of the tongue within changed matters greatly. On second thoughts (we are told in the blurb), the Comrades—like a certain historic reactionary—were not amused. The author became definitely suspect in high quarters.

This delayed reaction on the part of the Soviet authorities gives an adequate indication of Olyesha's literary finesse. "Envy" is full of subtle satirical comment on the Soviet system, presented in the loose form of a story that has the virtue of being humorous as well as satirical. It is paradoxically appropriate that the novel should have been dramatised in Russia under the title: *The Last Procession of the Sentiments*; for it voices, in a sense, the complete protest of the individual against the Totalitarian State. And Olyesha is a good enough writer to make the protest witty, intense, lyrical, moving, and—to anyone who cares for people without being a humanitarian—absolutely convincing.

The story itself is unimportant, but the literary technique is interesting as being an emanation of the individualist bias of the author's mind. The novel is written in the first person, and proceeds in a sort of harmonic progression of subjectivity. Sounds heard and thoughts pondered frequently take shape as characters or inanimate phenomena: as when a bell ringing . . . "Tom Virilirli . . . Tom Virilirli," so obsesses Kavelerov that Tom Virilirli becomes a real personage to him.

The translation by Anthony Wolf seems excellent. The English has pace, clarity and sincere idiosyncrasy.

NIALL SHERIDAN

TRANSITION

NEW WRITING. Edited by John Lehmann. No. 2. (*The Bodley Head*, 6s.).

These bi-annual collections of international "writings" are part of an increasingly influential current in contemporary literature which first took shape in the French movement known as "populisme" a few years ago. It intends to show the lives of the less fortunate economically, the seamstress, the labourer, the poor clerk, etc. V. S. Pritchett's sparkling story of a love-match between a commercial traveller and a hotel receptionist, amusingly built around the conversation of people who haven't anything very interesting to say (the first part of a question is answered in the second part of the answer and the second in the third), recounts love as it has to be concerned with money for setting up, for the train and the job. The movement may be admitted to be "new" only in that we are spared the humanitarian reflections which used to accompany the showing-up of social injustices in naturalist and realist fiction, probably because the writers are not refined persons anxious to "ameliorate" conditions. They reflect syndics in action. The higher press reviewers have stressed, evasively, their sense of comradeship. It is clear to be perceived, but it is of a band against others. In the "Breaking Point" section, for instance, the protagonist is exploding against unbearable conditions as a member of a class not as an individual. L. Halward's "Boss" holds the human dignity of of the apprentice in his power; and in Ralph Bates's "Comrade Vila," contemptuous of literary artifice (we are far from O. Henry and Joyce in all this book), the madman's loyalty to the betrayed poet is shown to have grown from their love of the same ideas.

There is an irrational hole in the centre of the book. Explanatory prose has to take refuge in an image, as our science has fallen into mystery again,

of a Norman stallion, a mad friend, or the hunchback fiddler in Louis Guilloux. Other excellent numbers are "The Football Match," by Rex Warner, the most affecting in the book, Jean Cassou's little satire and Vassili Grossman's faith story. Modern Populist stories with plots had better be short, perhaps, and leave something to a symbol; the longer ones are dreary to read.

NEW DIRECTIONS. Edited and published by James Laughlin. IV. (Norfolk, Conn., U.S.A.).

Most of the contributors to this review which, by the way, shows how foreign to English, American literature has become, are well-known in their own country. They are here collected under the aegis of "Transition," the American movement for the reform of language. The Editor declares that he has joined Transition because the ambiguity of speech is hindering the cause of Social Credit. As good a reason as any! Does not the emphasis laid on "experiment" and "workshop" show a rather coy honesty? Why load English with heavy compounds when its actual analytic forms are more vivid? There are beautifully glazed poems by Wallace Stevens leaving his earlier idealism for society. W. Carlos Williams is represented also, unadorned; Zukovsky slightly precious, and Jolas, with his oorianian swiftverbs. Cocteau's famous essay on Indirect Criticism is retranslated; there are a pretty baby story by Gertrude Stein and gangsterical stories in the pungent style practised by our American cousins.

DENIS DEVLIN

THE NONSENSIBUS. By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Methuen and Co., Ltd., 8s. 6d.).

Ridicule, kind and unkind, is the *raison d'être* for the whole realm of humor, from broad farce to high satire. When we laugh, it is more often than not at the expense of someone or something. By varying means do humorists pursue their end of ridicule: by under-statement, by pseudo-seriousness, by unexpected juxtapositions, by sheer manipulation of sounds.

This anthology of humorous extracts—like all anthologies—depends upon the taste of the compiler. The anthological process is likely to insult the reader because it presupposes that he has neither the time nor the discretion to make his own selection. Mr. Lewis has dispelled any such prejudice by providing passages from authors of divers nationalities and centuries, and by including prose, poetry, and drama. Because fashions change in humor, and because it is easier to make fun of contemporary *mores* than of the fundamentals of life, modern extracts outnumber the others.

Some like to take their humor straight, and can actually sit down with a book for the avowed purpose of laughter. Here is plenty of such unadulterated fare from out and out humorists like Stephen Leacock, Donald Ogden Stewart, P. G. Wodehouse. Those who prefer the incidental smile of comedy or the wry grimace of satire will find their favorites: Congreve, Thackeray, Dickens, for example. As for those who have the wit to wander in the regions of sheer nonsense, they will never be disappointed to find Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, or Walter de la Mare.

The Nonsensibus skims the cream of laughter not only from humorists pure and simple, but from those authors who stand upon a broader literary footing. Mr. Lewis' word of advice upon the "gallimaufry of gibberish" to the passers who go joy-riding in his *Nonsensibus* establishes beyond a doubt his own sense of humor. And besides: any man who brings together within the covers of one book, John Milton and Francois Rabelais, proves thereby his courage and ingenuity.

MARY COGAN BROMAGE

"THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1936." Edited by Edward J. O'Brien. (*Jonathan Cape*. 7s. 6d.).

The volume contains the work of some forty-two authors and is in two divisions, English and Irish, American and Canadian. The editor outlines his purpose: "I have set myself the task of disengaging the essential qualities in our contemporary fiction, which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life." It is where nearest to the purpose of this avowal that the short stories are best, most recognisably literature, in *The Mill* by H. E. Bates; *Torrent of Darkness*, by S. S. Field; *A Death in the Family*, by G. F. Green; *Pigeons*, by Michael McLaverty, all of which deal with proletarian-peasant life.

Dealing with a book of such wide variety the task of the reviewer is difficult. Its value, to my mind, lies chiefly in this, that it gives a vista in miniature of contemporary fiction, and as such discloses the unconscious function of literature to criticise life, to lay bare dark, understone cavities in a life where tradition is a surface pretence with the animating spirit dead; to turn the mind of man from the triumphal march of progress to the individual slave tied to the wheel—to act as conscience, chasten with pity.

Mr. O'Brien has done another service to contemporary writing and, I dare say, to contemporary morality.

EDWARD SHEEHY

WOOD ENGRAVING OF THE 1930's. Reviewed by Clare Leighton. (*Special Winter Number of the Studio*. 7/6 Wrapper, 10/6 Cloth.)

This anthology of recent Woodcuts shows this branch of art freed from the preciosity and self-consciousness that marked the beginning of its renaissance in this century. Wood Engraving has widened its frontiers considerably in the last twenty years, and Miss Leighton's reviewing deals with the main factors in its development: The growing popularity of the woodcut as book-illustration, particularly in the U.S.S.R.: Its use for better-class advertising in England and Germany: Its wider adoption as a medium by the creative artist in America, Poland, England and Germany.

Most of the reproductions are full-sized. Much of the work is well-known, that of Clare Leighton herself, Blair Hughes, Stanton, John Farleigh, Wladyslaw Skoczylas, Gertrude Hermes and Shelby Shackelford. But everything in the book has its significance and interest.

Miss Leighton has done her work well. Her method of classification, under headings: Traditional, Creative Design, Book Illustration, Technical Variety, Commercial, and Abstract Design, is excellent.

Under Book Illustration there are some beautiful examples of page architecture in the combined use of woodcut and type.

It is a book invaluable to the student and collector, and will be a source of keen pleasure to the layman with an interest in living work.

ANNA KELLY

THE MONTH IN RETROSPECT (16 NOV.—15 DEC.)

SEAN MACENTEE, Minister for Finance, appealing for St. Vincent de Paul Society, stated that while state may be liberal and even reckless it will rarely be spiritual and never human and sympathetic. Bishop Mageean in Belfast condemns means test as invasion of homes of poor. Cardinal MacRory stated strength of communism came from the miserable conditions of the working classes and the sufferings of the poor. Controversy over Aodh de Blacam's statement that women were not created to be fools minding foolproof machinery. 153,000 women and 340,000 men in industry in Saorstát. Serious school problem in decline in number of children in rural areas. Strong attack in Dail by Deputy Wm. Norton on wages being paid at new airport. Comment by Cork justice on prevalence of perjury. William Griffin, American publisher, told American association: "Everywhere I went in Ireland I found a new spirit of confidence and self-reliance."

Abdication of Edward VIII: Lord Craigavon sees Mr. Baldwin; reported that invitation to confer extended to Saorstát; Oath of loyalty taken by Northern Government; two bills introduced in Dail recognising George VI as head of commonwealth and removing powers of the crown from constitution; criticisms by opposition and Labour opposes, but measures passed supported by Fine Gael. Dail debate on partition, Deputy Frank MacDermott blaming Government policy as obstacle to unity; President replied: "We regard partition as cruel outrage . . . Force is out of the question . . . The rights of the majority demand that they not surrender their ideals in a vague hope that that these people in the North will change their attitude." Several branches of Irish Union association formed in North. Miss M. Buckley elected president at annual conference of Sinn Féin. Cumann na mBan break police seals on their headquarters in Dublin and hold convention. Dublin Citizens Traffic Association formed. Garda officers give traffic lectures to Dublin schoolchildren. Edward McCarron, Secretary of Local Government Department, removed from office on pension by executive council. Public Accounts Committee comment on garda station that cost £1,770 being sold for £131.

A Dublin Gaelic League Branch opens classes on Scottish Gaelic. For first time Oxford and Cambridge universities allow Irish in their school certificate examinations. Grant out of Sweep funds sanctioned for hospital libraries. Christopher Hollis, economic adviser to American Government, lecturing in Dublin, said the real and ultimate remedy for social evils was the distributive state.

Colonel Lindberg inspects new airport at Rynanna and gives President de Valera his first flight. At Women's Industrial Development Association's Aonach na Nodlag, Minister and Labour leader advise manufacturers that industrial revival not promoted for their sole benefit. Serious interference with manufacturing campaign caused by breakdown of machinery at Mallow sugar factory. Reported invasion of cinema trade by further foreign groups.

Spanish civil war. Parties of volunteers for insurgent army continued to leave for Spain, and 700 left Galway Bay on German liner, a small number, however, refusing to sail. Small party under Frank Ryan left to join Madrid Government forces. Church collects £43,000 for Spanish Catholics. Motion by Deputy William Cosgrave to recognise insurgents defeated.

Among deaths during the month were those of Patrick J. Tynan, "No. 1" of the Invincibles; Arthur Cahill, well-known Dublin Gael; Michael O'Toole, sergeant in Casement's Irish Brigade; Hugh Kennedy, Chief Justice, referred to by President as a great lawyer, judge and patriot; Dr. Thomas O'Doherty, Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh.

Northern Government prohibits film, "Ourselves Alone." Dr. Isaac Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Saorstát, elected Chief Rabbi of Palestine. Harvard expedition made first discovery of a glass workshop in Ireland at Lagore crannog, Dunshaughlin. Deputy Belton at Dublin County Council protested at exemption for Jews from provision for humane killing of beasts. Dublin Corporation decline offer of Belfast man to purchase remnants of statue of William III.

DENIS BARRY

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concessions in the Dutch East Indies, may be groundless. It is, however, worth noting that the Dutch East Indies have recently been making big purchases of armaments. Over a million dollars were spent thereon in the U.S.A. last July. Further, in the forthcoming general elections in Holland, the Dutch Government are making it part of their programme to increase the period of military service. It would appear that vitally important matters may soon have to be settled in the Western Pacific. Holland may well have reason to rejoice that Britain has decided to increase the efficiency of Singapore as a naval base ; and affairs in China may yet prove to have wider implications than would a mere squabble between two generals.

* * *

As Sir Norman Angell well points out, the German attitude to the Russian trial of Stickling was a trifle illogical : "The German public in lashing itself into such a fury over the condemnation of Stickling, seemed not in the least embarrassed by the fact that he was living in Russia as a Communist. If he were what he said he was, then in Germany he would have been in prison or concentration camp, as an enemy of the Fatherland. Was Germany then going to war on behalf of an enemy of the Fatherland? And if he was not a Communist and worth fighting for, then he was, indeed, in Russia under false pretences, a Nazi agent, and the Russians were justified." The pretext referred to last month still remains to be found, for Stickling was not executed.

* * *

News from Madrid is somewhat confused. Franco, with more than half the country behind him, is short of troops. Five thousand German tourists hasten to the scene and still Madrid resists. On November 11th, Quiapo de Llano announces from Radio Seville that "the masses will never be able to accomplish anything against the soldiers." Evidently the half of Spain, which is behind Franco, is not "the masses." We may, or may not, believe this general when he says : "Our troops will enter Madrid when they are ordered to do so" ; but we must be forgiven for expressing surprise when, after a fortnight of fierce bombardment of Madrid, we are told that it is "for humanitarian reasons alone" that the city has not yet been seized by Franco's troops. Perhaps there is some other reason.

* * *

In a previous civil war, the American one, the English were unfortunate in their choice of a champion. They chose to support

(continued on page 76)